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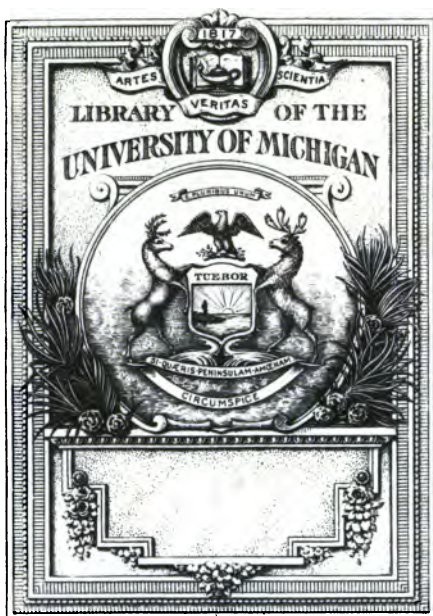
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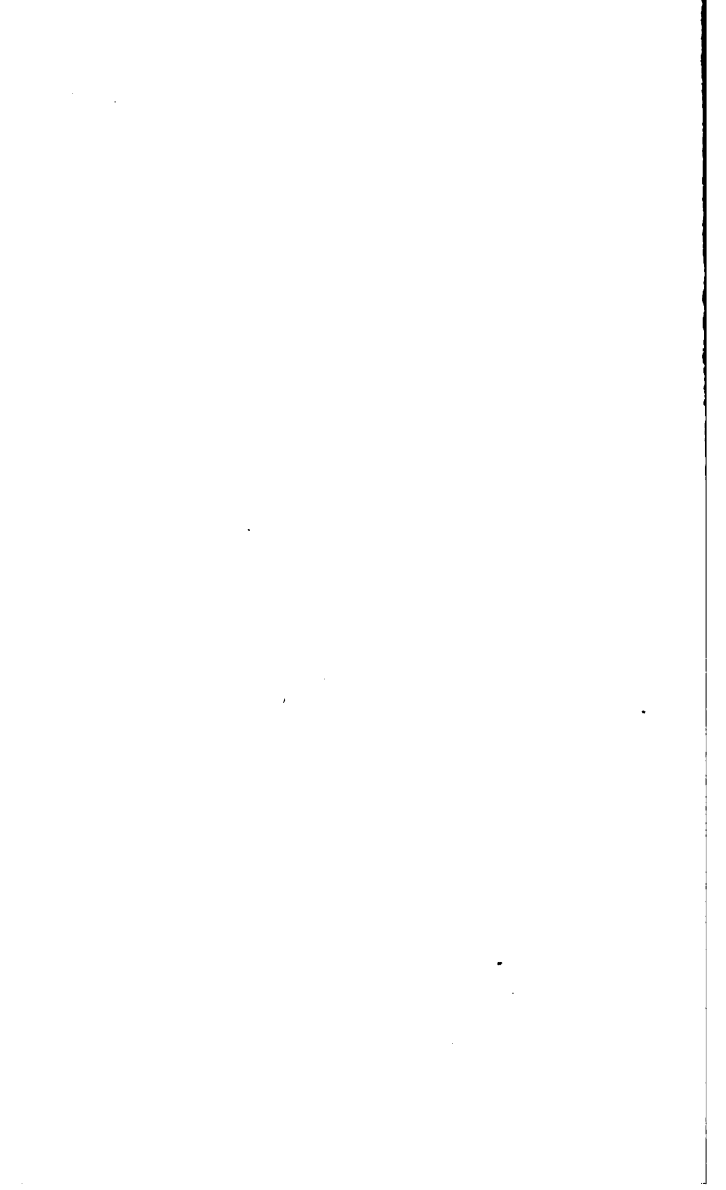
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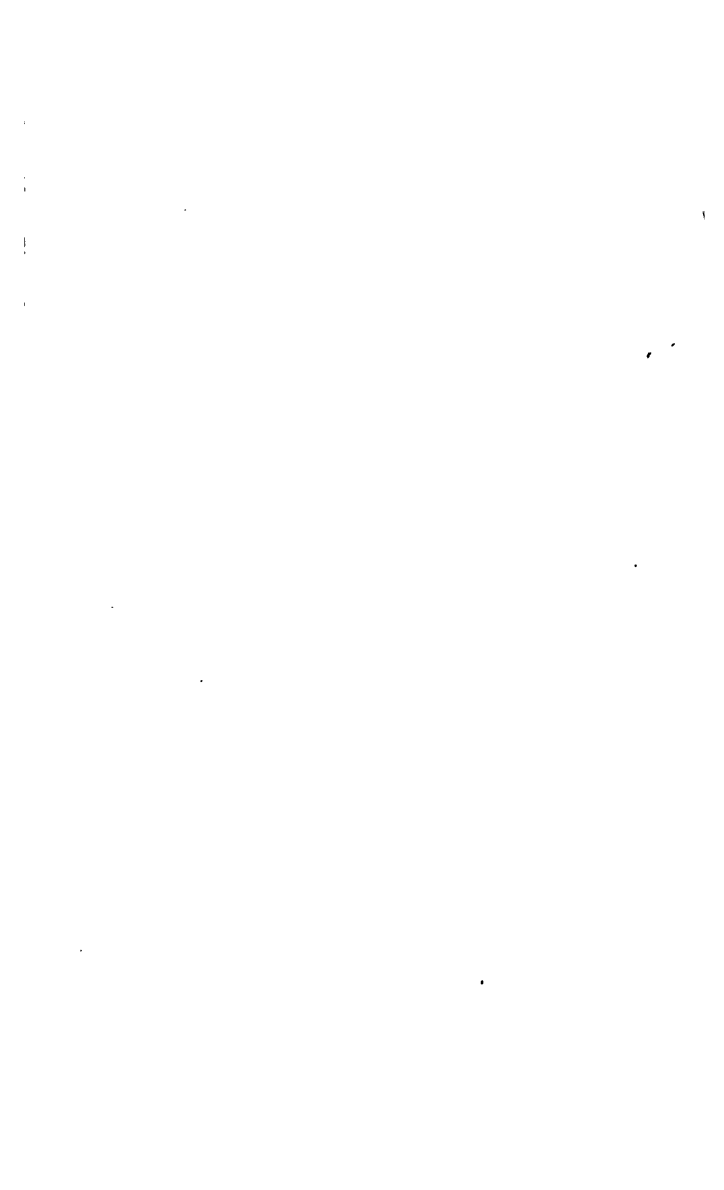


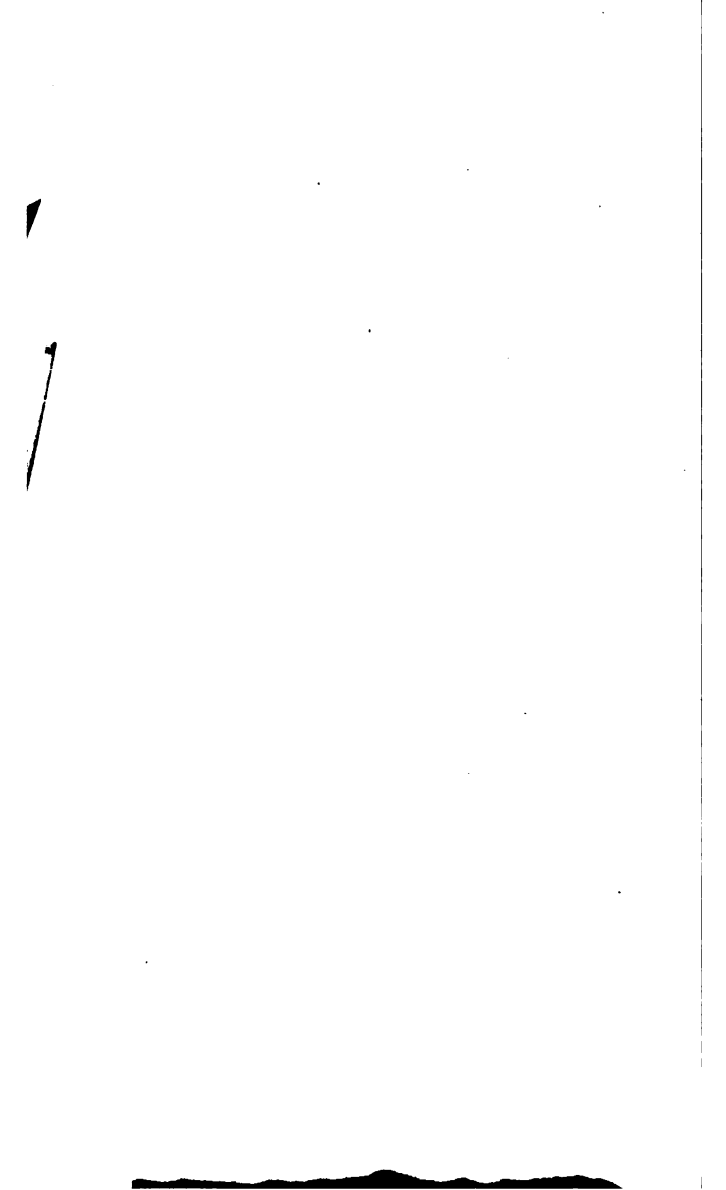
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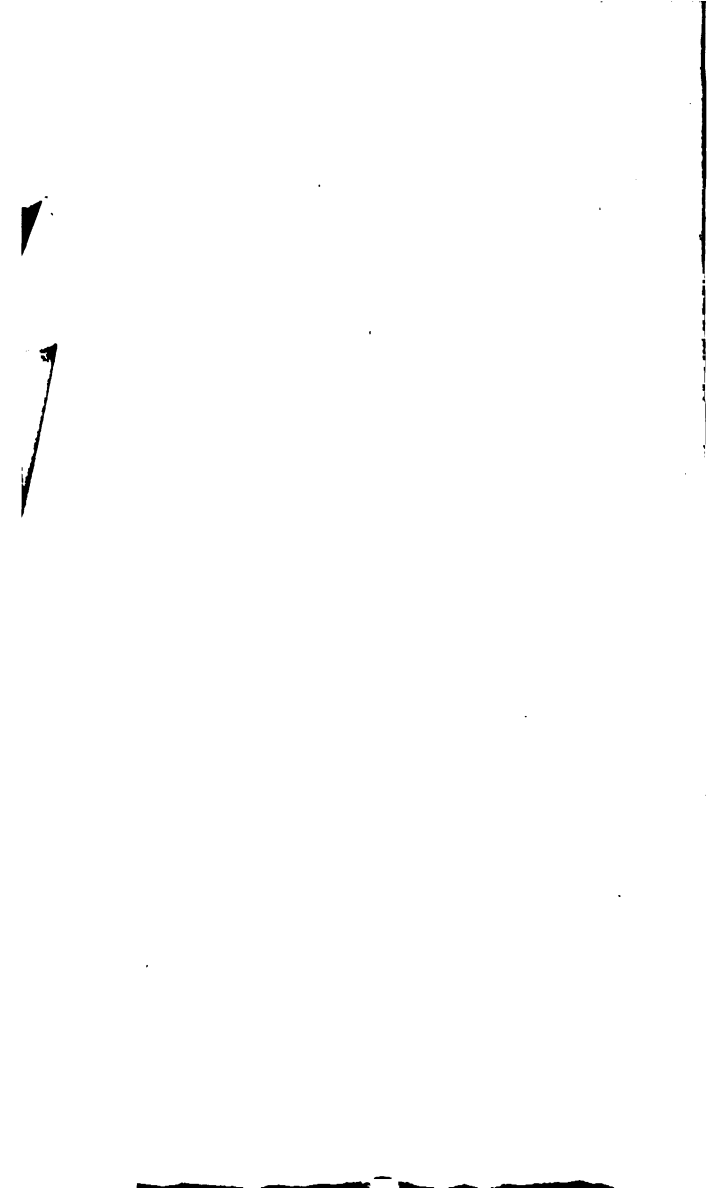
1882







GAY'S FABLES



GAY'S FABLES

There are portraits of Gay by Aikman (Mrs. Howard's portrait?), Zincke, Dahl, and others. That here given is from a hitherto unengraved sketch in oils by Sir Godfrey Kneller. With the kind permission of Mr. George Scharf, F.S.A., Keeper of the National Portrait Gallery, it has been etched expressly for this edition by Mr. Richard H. A. Willis.





21643

FABLES

BY

MR. JOHN GAY

WITH A MEMOIR BY

AUSTIN DOBSON



LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO.

MDCCCLXXXII



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MEMOIR.

NO material addition, in the way of supplementary information, can now be made to the frequently reprinted "Life of Gay" in Johnson's "Poets," or to the genial and kindly sketch in Thackeray's "English Humourists." Still, in a fresh issue of his "Fables," some brief account of him may fairly be expected. He was born in 1688 at Barnstaple in Devonshire. He came of an old but impoverished family, and was educated under a local schoolmaster of certain pretensions to literature, who is affirmed to have been the author of a volume of Latin and English verses. Johnson says this worthy's name was Luck. If so, he must have been the "R. Luck, A.M., Master

of Barnstaple School," whose poems were published by Cave in April 1736; but it is most likely that Gay's earliest preceptor was a predecessor of Luck's, whom Pope called William Rayner, and who was also accused of versifying. Whatever progress the future fabulist made under these instructors, it is clear from his subsequent career that he had more than a bowing acquaintance with the classics. Indeed, there is still preserved in the "Forster Library" at South Kensington, a large-paper copy of Maittaire's "Horace" (Tonson and Watts, 1715), which contains Gay's autograph, and is copiously annotated in his beautiful handwriting. This of itself should be sufficient to refute the aspersions cast upon his scholarship by a recent critic of Swift; for it affords certain evidence that even at twenty-seven, and perhaps at a much later period, he was a diligent student of the charming lyrist and satirist who, above all others, commends himself to the attention of

idle men. In his boyhood, however, it must be assumed that Gay's indolence was more strongly developed than his application, for his friends could find no better opening for him than that of apprentice to a London silk-mercator. With this vocation he was speedily dissatisfied. The late John Hill Burton, in his "History of the Reign of Queen Anne," implies that he ran away; but there is nothing to show that he took any step of so energetic a character. The most reasonable supposition is, that after spending some time idly in his native place, he returned to London to try his fortune with letters. At that time the swarming clubs and coffee-houses afforded opportunities of access to literary notabilities, now scarcely conceivable; and Gay was of a temper to find friends. Of his earliest efforts no record has been preserved. Gossipers, it is said, asserted in after days that he was employed for some time as amanuensis to Aaron Hill,

notorious subsequently for that quarrel with Pope which won him the honours of the "Dunciad." But to 1708—on Hill's authority—is assigned Gay's first published poem, "Wine," the purport of which may be gathered from the—

*"Nulla placere diu, nec vivere carmina possunt,
Quæ scribuntur aquæ potoribus"—*

of its motto, a disputed theory which seems to have "exercised" the author nearly all his life. He claims, in this production, to "draw Miltonic air;" but the atmosphere is more suggestive of the "Splendid Shilling" than of "Paradise Lost," a fact which may account for the omission of the verses from the later quarto of 1720. In 1712 he contributed a translation of one of Ovid's "Metamorphoses" to the famous "Rape of the Lock" volume of Lintot's "Miscellaneous Poems and Translations," and in the same year he became "secretary or domestic steward" to the Duchess of Mon-

mouth—that “virtuous and excellent lady,” as Evelyn calls her—whose husband had been beheaded in 1685. It was probably in this capacity that he made the acquaintance of Pope, who was his own age, and to whom, in 1713, he dedicated his “Rural Sports, a Georgic,” which displays a good deal of unconventional knowledge of country-life, and especially of hunting and fishing. This characteristic no doubt induced Pope to invoke his aid in the crusade he was then waging against the artificial pastoral of Ambrose Philips; and Gay’s “Shepherd’s Week,” 1714, was the result of this alliance. He was to depict rusticity after “the true ancient guise of Theocritus,” or, in plainer words, by representing it in its blowzed and unkempt reality, to cast merited ridicule upon the “mild Arcadians” of the period. But the humour and keen observation of his pictures attracted more attention than their satirical purpose; and they may still be

studied with pleasure for their folk-lore and their homely fidelity to nature. From a biographical point of view, however, the most interesting part of the "Shepherd's Week" is its prologue to Bolingbroke, the allusions in which seem to show that the sometime mercer's apprentice had already made the acquaintance of Arbuthnot, and probably of some fairer critics whose favour was of greater importance to poetical advancement.

"No more"—he says—

"No more I'll sing *Buxoma* brown,
Like goldfinch in her *Sunday* gown;
Nor *Clumsilis*, nor *Marian* bright,
Nor damsel that *Hobnelia* hight.
But *Lansdown* fresh as flow'r of *May*,
And *Berkely* lady blithe and gay,
And *Anglesey*, whose speech exceeds
The voice of pipe, or oaten reeds;
And blooming *Hyde*, with eyes so rare,
And *Montague* beyond compare."

"Blooming *Hyde*, with eyes so rare," was
Lady Jane Hyde, daughter of the Earl of

Rochester, and elder sister of the "Kitty, beautiful and young," who was subsequently to be Gay's warmest friend. Early in the year in which "The Shepherd's Week" appeared, Gay, who—as he says—was now "quite off" with the Duchess of Monmouth, obtained the appointment, by Swift's interest, of Secretary to Lord Clarendon (Lord Rochester's cousin), then Envoy-Extraordinary to the Court of Hanover; and there exists a curious rhymed petition from the needy poet to Lord Treasurer Oxford, in which he solicits funds to enable him to set out on his journey. For a brief space we must imagine him strutting "in silver and blue" through the clipped avenues of Herrenhausen, yawning over the routine life of the little German court, and perfecting himself in the diplomatic arts of "bowing profoundly, speaking deliberately, and wearing both sides of his long periwig before." Then the death of Queen Anne put an end to

these halcyon days. What was worse, the "Shepherd's Week" had been dedicated to Bolingbroke; and Bolingbroke, as ill-luck would have it, was not in favour with Her Majesty's successor. In this strait, as a course which "could do no harm," Pope counselled his hapless friend to "write something on the King, or Prince, or Princess." Thereupon Gay prepared an "Epistle to a Lady, occasion'd by the Arrival of Her Royal Highness" (*i.e.* the Princess of Wales), in which he touches plaintively upon the forlorn hopes of impecunious suitors:—

"Pensive each night, from room to room I walk'd,
To one I bow'd, and with another talk'd;
Enquir'd what news, or such a Lady's name,
And did the next day, and the next, the same.
Places, I found, were daily giv'n away,
And yet no friendly Gazette mentioned *Gay*."

The only appreciable result of this ingenuous appeal would seem to have been that the Prince and Princess of Wales came

to see the "tragi-comi-pastoral farce" of the "What d'ye call it," which Gay produced in 1715, and of which the sole enduring part is the musical ballad, "'Twas when the seas were roaring." In the following year he published "Trivia; or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London," in three books, an unexpected theme for an author whose tastes were certainly not pedestrian. In the "Advertisement" to this, he acknowledges the aid of Swift; and it is, indeed, not improbable that "Trivia" was originally suggested by the "Morning" and "City Shower" which Swift had previously contributed to the "Tatler." However this may be, Gay's poem is sprightly and readable, and full of interest for the antiquary and student of eighteenth-century "humours." The coarse and ill-advised comedy of "Three Hours after Marriage," which he wrote with Pope and Arbuthnot, and of which he bore the failure, may be passed over without

further mention. During all this period he seems to have been vaguely expecting court favour, and to have suffered most of the discouragements of hope deferred. Yet if the court neglected his pretensions,—and it nowhere appears that they were very urgent or very valid,—he found friends whose kindness took a practical form. In 1716, Lord Burlington sent him into Devonshire; in the year following Pulteney, afterwards Earl of Bath, carried him to Aix, and in 1718 he went with Lord Harcourt to Oxfordshire, where befell that pretty tragedy of the two haymakers struck by lightning, which sentimental Mr. Pope made the subject of a famous letter to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who, unluckily for sentiment, received it in anything but a sympathetic spirit. The journeys to Exeter and Aix were commemorated in a couple of epistles, not more spontaneous than most tributary verse. These, with other pieces, ultimately found

a place in the fine quarto edition of Gay's poems which Tonson and Lintot published in 1720, with a frontispiece by the eminent William Kent, and a list of subscribers rivalling in number, and exceeding in interest, that prefixed to the "Prior" of 1718. Those munificent patrons of literature, the Earl of Burlington and the Duke of Chandos, took fifty copies apiece. Truly the poet was right when, in a more sanguine moment, he wrote that "he knew no age so justly to be instilled *Golden*" as that in which he lived !

Among the other names on the subscription-list are two which have an especial attraction in Gay's life, for they are those of his kindest and most attached friends, the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry. The lady was the charming and wayward Catharine Hyde,—the "Kitty" whose first appearance at Drury Lane play-house as a triumphant beauty of eighteen, Prior had celebrated in some of his brightest and

airiest verses, and whose picture, as a milk-maid of quality, painted by Jervas at a later date, is to be seen in the "National Portrait Gallery." As already stated, Gay had written of her sister Jane (by this time Countess of Essex) as far back as 1714; and it may be that her own acquaintance with him dated from the same period. But after her marriage to the Duke of Queensberry in 1720, she appears to have taken him completely under her protection. "He [Gay] is always with the Duchess of Queensberry," writes Mrs. Bradshaw to Mrs. Howard in 1721; and, in 1726, the poet himself tells Swift that he has been with his patrons at Oxford and at Petersham, and "wheresoever they would carry me." In the intervals he is helping Congreve to nurse his gout "at the *Bath*," or "living almost altogether" with Lord Burlington at Chiswick, or acting as amanuensis to Pope ("which, you know, is no idle charge"),

or borrowing sheets from Jervas to entertain Swift in those lodgings at Whitehall which had been granted to him by the Earl of Lincoln, and which were taken from him by Sir Robert Walpole. It speaks much for the charm of his character that he knew how to acquire and to retain friends so constant and so diverse. But the baseless hopes that haunt the unenergetic seem never to have deserted him. At one time he was supposed to have been the possessor of an ample fortune in South Sea stock, which vanished while he was deciding what to do with it; and again he looked confidently for advancement to the accession of the Prince and Princess of Wales. His hopes were dashed to the ground, by a nomination as Gentleman Usher to the little Princess Louisa, a post for which he rightly thought himself too old. Yet he was never without some compensations. By the *quarto* edition of his "Poems" he.

made £1000, and he was to be more fortunate still.

Since 1720 he had written but little of importance. The tragedy of the "Captives," which appeared in 1724, had small success on the stage, and in 1727 he published the 1st series of the "Fables," to which fuller reference will be made hereafter. But on the 29th of January 1728 was produced, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, his famous "Beggar's Opera," which for a season overthrew Italian song—"that Dagon of the Nobility and Gentry, who had so long seduced them to idolatry," as the "Companion to the Playhouse" puts it—and made its author's name a household word. How it first occurred to Swift what "an odd pretty sort of a thing a Newgate Pastoral might make;" how friends hesitated, and Cibber rejected, and the public rapturously applauded; how it was sung at street-corners and painted on screens; how it procured its "Polly" a coronet; and

made Rich [the manager] gay, and Gay [the author] rich—all these things are the commonplaces of literature. At Mr. John Murray's in Albemarle Street may still be seen one of the pictures which William Hogarth painted of that all-conquering company, and which, years afterwards, was engraved by William Blake. The Coryphæus of the highway (Walker) appears in the centre, while "Lucy" (Mrs. Eggleton) pleads for him to the left, and "Polly" (Miss Fenton) to the right. Rich, and the Duke of Bolton, who married Miss Fenton, are among the spectators. Scandal, in the person of John, Lord Hervey, adds that the opera owed a part of its popularity to something in the dilemma of Macheath, which irresistibly suggested the equally equivocal position of Walpole between his wife and his mistress. This is probably exaggerated; but it accounts in a measure for the fate which befell Gay's next enterprise.

That some attempt to perpetuate so splendid a success as the "Beggar's Opera" should not be made was scarcely in the nature of things ; and Gay set speedily about the preparation of a sequel, to which he gave the name of the popular heroine of the earlier piece. But "Polly" was saved from the common fate of continuations by the action of the Lord Chamberlain, taken, it is supposed, upon the instruction of Walpole. When it was almost ready for rehearsal, the representation was prohibited. The result of this not very far-sighted step upon the part of the authorities was to surround its publication as a book (1729) with an unprecedented and wholly fictitious interest. Friends on all sides, and especially those opposed to the court, strained every nerve to promote the sale. The Duchess of Marlborough gave £100 for a copy ; and the Duchess of Queensberry, who had the temerity to solicit subscriptions within the

very precincts of St. James's, was forbidden to return to them. Thereupon the Duke, who was not on the best terms with the ministers, threw up his appointments, and followed his lady, who delivered a Parthian shaft in the shape of a very indiscreet and saucy letter to his Majesty King George. In all this it is plain that Gay's misfortune was simply made the instrument of political antagonisms ; but, for the moment, his name was on every lip. "The inoffensive *John Gay*" — writes Arbuthnot to Swift under date of March 19, 1729—"is now become one of the obstructions to the peace of *Europe*, the terror of the ministers, the chief author of the *Craftsman* and all the seditious pamphlets which have been published against the Government. He has got several turned out of their places ; the greatest ornament of the court banished from it for his sake ; another great lady [Mrs. Howard, afterwards Countess of Suf-

folk] in danger of being *chassé* [*sic*] likewise ; about seven or eight duchesses pushing forward, like the antient *circumcelliones* in the Church, who shall suffer martyrdom upon his account first. He is the darling of the city. . . . I can assure you, this is the very identical *John Gay* whom you formerly knew, and lodged with in *Whitehall* two years ago." The gross result was that Gay made about £1200 by the publication of "*Polly*," of which Bowyer, the printer, struck off 10,500 copies in one year ; by the representation of the "*Beggar's Opera*" he had made, according to his own account, "between £700 and £800."

During a great part of 1728 Gay resided at Bath with the Duchess of Marlborough. After the prohibition of "*Polly*," he appears to have fallen ill, and was tenderly nursed by Arbuthnot. Then the Queensberrys took formal charge of him ;

and henceforth he resided entirely either at their town-house in Burlington Gardens, or at their country-seat of Amesbury in Wiltshire. The Duke kept the poet's money for him ; the Duchess watched over the poet himself. In the Swift correspondence there are some charming joint letters to the Dean in Ireland from Gay and his patroness, and they give a most engaging picture of this alliance of the fabulist and the "*grande dame de par le monde*" of the last century. Walpole speaks of the latter as her "mad grace ;" and Mrs. Delany, who knew her well, sighs piously over her long-protracted eccentricities ; but in this connection she is altogether charming. As these letters have been somewhat neglected by Gay's biographers, one of them is reprinted here. It is by no means a pattern "eighteenth-century epistle," not having been composed (like Pope's and Walpole's) with an eye to future publication ; but it is

thoroughly characteristic of the writers, and is certainly not wanting in some of that vivacity and cheerfulness which (we are told) is seldom absent from the best models. Amesbury, from which it is dated, now, alas ! no longer exists, and a summer-house is all that remains of the buildings as they were in the time of Gay and his kind protectress.

“Amesbury, Dec. the 6th, 1730.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Both your letters, to my great satisfaction, I have received. You were mistaken as to my being in town ; for I have been here ever since the beginning of *May*. But the best way is to direct your letters always to the duke's house, in *London* ; and they are sent hither by his porter. You say, we deserve envy : I think, we do ; for I envy no man, either in town or out of it. We have had some few visitors, and every one of them such, as one would desire to visit. The duchess is a more severe check upon my finances than ever you were ; and I submit, as I did to you, to com-

ply to my own good. I was a long time, before I could prevail with her to let me allow myself a pair of shoes with two heels ; for I had lost one, and the shoes were so decayed, that they were not worth mending. You see by this, that those, who are the most generous of their own, can be the most covetous for others. I hope you will be so good to me, as to use your interest with her (for, whatever she says, you seem to have some) to indulge] me with the extravagance suitable to my fortune.

“ The lady you mention, that dislikes you, hath no discernment. I really think, you may safely venture to *Amesbury*, though indeed the lady here likes to have her own way as well as you ; which may sometimes occasion disputes : and, I tell you beforehand, that I cannot take your part. I think her so often in the right, that you will have great difficulty to persuade me that she is in the wrong. Then, there is another thing that I ought to tell you, to deter you from this place ; which is, that the lady of the house is not given to shew civility to those she does not like. She speaks her mind, and loves truth. For the uncommonness of the thing, I fancy, your curiosity will prevail over your fear ; and you will like to see such a woman. But

I say no more, till I know whether her grace will fill up the rest of the paper."

[*The Duchess continues.*]

"Write I must, particularly now, as I have an opportunity to indulge my predominant passion of contradiction. I do, in the first place, contradict most things Mr. *Gay* says of me, to deter you from coming here ; which, if you ever do, I hereby assure you, that, unless I like my own way better, you shall have yours, and in all disputes you shall convince me, if you can. But, by what I see of you, this is not a misfortune, that will always happen ; for I find you are a great mistaker. For example, you take prudence for imperiousness : 'tis from this first, that I determined not to like one, who is too giddy-headed for me to be certain whether or no I shall ever be acquainted with. I have known people take great delight in building castles in the air ; but I should choose to build friends upon a more solid foundation. I would fain know you ; for I often hear more good likeable things than 'tis possible any one can deserve. Pray, come, that I may find out something wrong ; for I, and I believe, most women, have an inconceivable pleasure to find out any faults,

except their own. Mr. *Cibber** is made poet laureat.

"I am, Sir, as much your humble servant as I can be to any person I don't know,

"C. Q.

"Mr. *Gay* is very peevish that I spell and write ill; but I don't care; for neither the pen nor I can do better. Besides, I think you have flattered me, and such people ought to be put to trouble."

Other letters follow, most of them written from Amesbury, and bearing the same burden—the invitation of Swift to England. The last of the series is dated November 16, 1732; and in this *Gay* reports that he has come to London before the family, 'to follow his own inventions," which included the production of his recently-written opera of "*Achilles*." A few days later he was attacked by a constitutional malady to which he had long been sub-

* "*Harmonious Cibber* entertains
The Court with annual Birth-day Strains;
Whence *Gay* was banish'd in Disgrace."
SWIFT, On Poetry: a Rhapsody, 1733.

ject, and died on the 4th of December. After lying in state in Exeter 'Change, he was (says Arbuthnot) "interred at *Westminster-Abbey*, as if he had been a peer of the realm," and the Queensberrys erected a handsome monument to his memory. By other friends he was mourned as sincerely, if not as sumptuously. Pope seems to have felt a genuine sorrow, and five days elapsed before Swift at Dublin could summon courage to open the letter which announced his death. His fortune, of which his patrons had made themselves the voluntary stewards, amounted to about £6000. It was divided between his sisters, Mrs. Baller and Mrs. Fortescue.

His last letter to Swift had ended thus :—
"Believe me, as I am, unchangeable in the regard, love, and esteem I have for you." These words reveal the chief source of his personal charm. He was thoroughly kindly and affectionate, with just that touch of

clinging in his nature, and of helplessness in his character, which, when it does not inspire contempt (and Gay's parts secured him from that), makes a man the spoiled child of men and the playfellow of women. He had his frailties, it is true; he was as indolent as Thomson; as fond of fine clothes as Goldsmith; as great a *gourmand* as La Fontaine. That he was also easily depressed and despondent was probably the result of his inactive life and his uncertain health. But, at his best, he must have been a delightfully equable and unobtrusive companion—invaluable for fêtes and gala-days, and equally well-adapted for the half-lights and unrestrained intercourse of familiar life. “You will never”—writes Swift to the Duchess of Queensberry—“be able to procure another so useful, so sincere, so virtuous, so disinterested, so entertaining, so easy, and so humble a friend, as that person whose death all good men lament.” The

praise is high, but there is little doubt that it was genuine. Pope's antithetical epitaph, despite the terrible mangling it has received at the hands of Johnson, may also be here quoted :—

“ Of manners gentle, of affections mild ;
In wit a man ; simplicity, a child :
With native humour temp'ring virtuous rage,
Form'd to delight at once and lash the age :
Above temptation, in a low estate,
And uncorrupted, e'en among the great :
A safe companion, and an easy friend,
Unblam'd through life, lamented in thy end.
These are thy honours ! not that here thy bust
Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust,
But that the worthy and the good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms—*Here* lies GAY.

The monument in Westminster Abbey, for which the above was composed, bears in addition a couplet of Gay's own :—

“ Life is a jest, and all things show it ;
I thought so once, but now I know it.”

It is not necessary to attempt any detailed

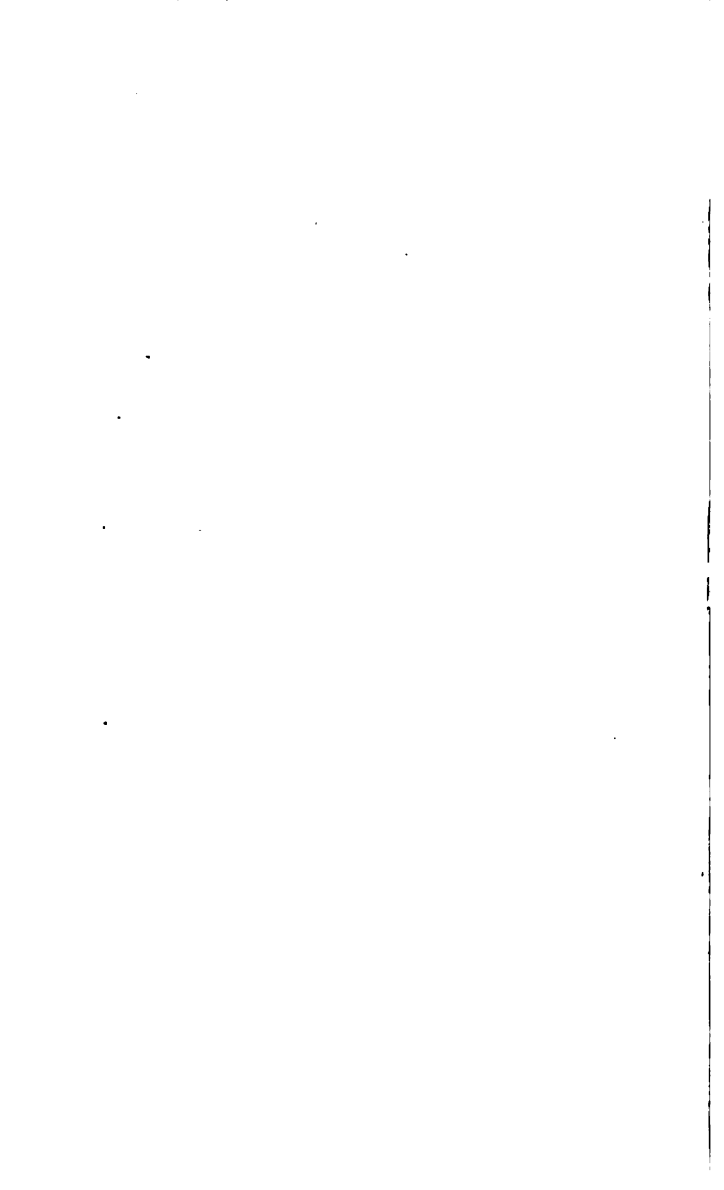
examination of Gay's works. Those among them most likely to attract the nineteenth-century reader have been mentioned in the course of the foregoing pages. Stripped of the adventitious circumstances which threw a halo of notoriety around them, his two best-known plays remain of interest chiefly for their songs, which have all the qualities songs possess when the writer, besides being a poet, is a musician as well. This lyric faculty is also present in all Gay's lesser pieces, and is as manifest in the ballad on pretty Miss Nelly Bennet at the French Court, as in "Black-Eyed Susan" or "'Twas when the Seas were roaring." In his longer poems he seems always happiest when he is most unconstrained and natural, or treads the *terra firma* of the world he knows. The "Fan," the "Eclogues," the "Epistles," are all more or less forced and conventional. But exceptions occur even in these. There is a foretaste of

Fielding in the "Birth of the Squire;" and the "Welcome from Greece," in which he congratulates Pope upon his successful translation of the "Iliad," has a brightness of movement which seems to be the result of an unusually fresh inspiration. It is written, moreover, in an *ottava rima* stanza far earlier than Tennant's or Frere's or Byron's. The "Tales" are mediocre and generally indelicate; the "Translations" have no special merit. In the "Fables" now presented to the reader, Gay finds a more congenial vocation. The easy octosyllabic measure, not packed and idiomatic like Swift's, not light and ironical like Prior's, but ambling, colloquial, and even a little down-at-heel, after the fashion of the bard himself, suited his habits and his Muse. An uncompromising criticism might perhaps be inclined to hint that these little pieces are by no means faultless; that they are occasionally deficient in narrative art,

that they lack real variety of theme, and that they are often wearisome, almost unmanly, in their querulous insistence on the vices of servility and the hollowness of courts. On the other hand, it must be admitted that they are full of *bonhomie* and good sense; and if not characterised by the highest philosophic wisdom, show much humorous "criticism of life" and practical observation of mankind. They have, too, some further recommendations, which can scarcely be ignored. They have given pleasure to several generations of readers, old and young; and they have enriched the language with more than one indispensable quotation. "When a lady's in the case," and "Two of a trade can ne'er agree," are still part of the current coin of conversation.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

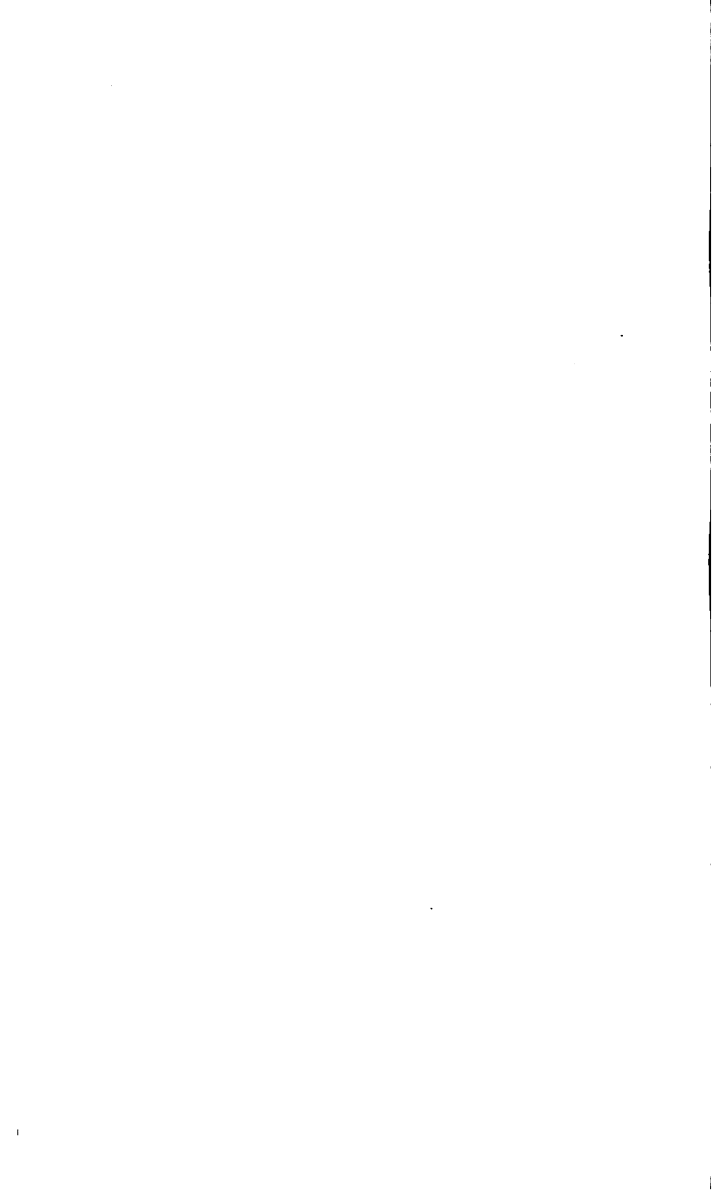
13 GRANGE PARK,
EALING, W.



BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

THE first series of fifty fables was first published in one volume *quarto*, and is dated 1727. The title-page bears a vignette of a mask, and runs as follows:—"Fables. By Mr. Gay. London. Printed for J. Tonson and J. Watts. MDCCXXVII." The plates in the text (to the slow progress of which there are references in the author's correspondence) were designed by Kent, the architect, and John Wootton, the animal-painter, and they were engraved by Fourdrinier, Baron, and Vandergucht. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May 1824, p. 410, it is stated that the *Fables* and the *Beggar's Opera* were "assigned to Tonson and Watts on February 6, 1728, for ninety guineas."

The second series of sixteen fables was also published in one volume *quarto*, dated 1738. The title is—"Fables. By the late Mr. Gay. Volume the Second. Printed for J. and P. Knapton in Ludgate Street, and T. Cox under the Royal Exchange. MDCCXXXVIII." The text is preceded by the "Advertisement" reproduced at p. 134 of the present edition. There is a frontispiece representing Gay's tomb in Westminster Abbey, with Pope's epitaph as printed at p. xxx of the foregoing "Introduction," and the title-page vignette is a medallion portrait of the poet. Both of these are drawn by Gravelot, and engraved by Scotin. The full-page illustrations are also by the same artist and engraver. Concurrently with its issue as a *quarto* the volume appears to have been published in *octavo* form, and in the same year Tonson and Watts brought out an *octavo* edition (the fourth) of the first series. There are numerous subsequent issues, but the only ones which need be noticed here are the little volume of 1779, which contained some of the earliest woodcuts of Thomas Bewick, and Stockdale's large edition of 1793, which includes, *inter alia*, no less than nine plates, both designed and engraved by William Blake.



INTRODUCTION

TO THE

FABLES

PART THE FIRST.

THE SHEPHERD AND THE PHILOSOPHER.

REMOTE from cities liv'd a Swain,
Unvex'd with all the cares of gain ;
His head was silver'd o'er with age,
And long experience made him sage ;
In summer's heat, and winter's cold,
He fed his flock and penn'd the fold ;
His hours in cheerful labour flew,
Nor envy nor ambition knew :
His wisdom and his honest fame
Through all the country rais'd his name.

A deep Philosopher (whose rules
Of moral life were drawn from schools)
The Shepherd's homely cottage sought,
And thus explor'd his reach of thought.
Whence is thy learning? Hath thy toil
O'er books consum'd the midnight oil?
Hast thou old Greece and Rome survey'd,
And the vast sense of PLATO weigh'd?
Hath SOCRATES thy soul refin'd,
And hast thou fathom'd TULLY'S mind?
Or, like the wise ULYSSES thrown
By various fates on realms unknown,
Hast thou through many cities stray'd,
Their customs, laws, and manners weigh'd?

The Shepherd modestly replied,
I ne'er the paths of learning tried;
Nor have I roam'd in foreign parts
To read mankind, their laws and arts;
For man is practis'd in disguise,
He cheats the most discerning eyes;
Who by that search shall wiser grow,
When we ourselves can never know?

The little knowledge I have gain'd,
Was all from simple nature drain'd ;
Hence my life's maxims took their rise,
Hence grew my settled hate to vice.

✓ The daily labours of the bee
Awake my soul to industry.
Who can observe the careful ant,
And not provide for future want ?
My dog (the trustiest of his kind)
With gratitude inflames my mind ;
I mark his true, his faithful way,
And in my service copy Tray. ✓
In constancy and nuptial love,
I learn my duty from the dove.
The hen, who from the chilly air,
With pious wing protects her care ;
And ev'ry fowl that flies at large,
Instructs me in a parent's charge.
From nature too I take my rule,
To shun contempt and ridicule.
I never, with important air,
In conversation overbear.

Can grave and formal pass for wise,
When men the solemn owl despise ?
My tongue within my lips I rein ;
For who talks much, must talk in vain.
We from the wordy torrent fly :
Who listens to the chatt'ring pie ?
Nor would I, with felonious flight,
By stealth invade my neighbour's right,
Rapacious animals we hate :
Kites, hawks, and wolves, deserve their fate.
Do not we just abhorrence find
Against the toad and serpent kind ?
But envy, calumny, and spite,
Bear stronger venom in their bite.
Thus ev'ry object of creation
Can furnish hints to contemplation ;
And from the most minute and mean,
A virtuous mind can morals glean.
Thy fame is just, the sage replies ;
Thy virtue proves thee truly wise.
Pride often guides the author's pen ;
Books as affected are as men :

But he who studies nature's laws,
From certain truth his maxims draws ;
And those, without our schools, suffice
To make men moral, good, and wise.

TO HIS HIGHNESS
WILLIAM
DUKE OF CUMBERLAND

FABLE I.

THE LION, THE TIGER, AND THE TRAVELLER.

A CCEPT, young PRINCE, the moral lay,
And in these tales mankind survey ;
With early virtues plant your breast,
The specious arts of vice detest.
Princes, like beauties, from their youth
Are strangers to the voice of truth ;
Learn to condemn all praise betimes ;
For flattery's the nurse of crimes :
Friendship by sweet reproof is shown,
(A virtue never near a throne) ;

In courts such freedom must offend,
There none presumes to be a friend.
To those of your exalted station
Each courtier is a dedication.
Must I too flatter like the rest,
And turn my morals to a jest ?
The Muse disdains to steal from those,
Who thrive in courts by fulsome prose.
But shall I hide your real praise,
Or tell you what a nation says ?
They in your infant bosom trace
The virtues of your royal race ;
In the fair dawning of your mind
Discern you gen'rous, mild, and kind ;
They see you grieve to hear distress,
And pant already to redress.
Go on, the height of good attain,
Nor let a nation hope in vain.
For hence we justly may presage
The virtues of a riper age.
True courage shall your bosom fire,
And future actions own your sire.

Cowards are cruel ; but the brave
Love mercy, and delight to save.

A Tiger roaming for his prey,
Sprung on a Trav'ler in the way ;
The prostrate game a lion spies,
And on the greedy tyrant flies ;
With mingled roar resounds the wood,
Their teeth, their claws distil with blood ;
Till vanquish'd by the Lion's strength,
The spotted foe extends his length.
The Man besought the shaggy lord,
And on his knees for life implor'd.
His life the gen'rous hero gave ;
Together walking to his cave,
The Lion thus bespoke his guest.

What hardy beast shall dare contest
My matchless strength ! You saw the fight,
And must attest my pow'r and right.
Forc'd to forego their native home,
My starving slaves at distance roam.
Within these woods I reign alone,
The boundless forest is my own.

Bears, wolves, and all the savage brood,
Have dy'd the regal den with blood.
These carcasses on either hand,
Those bones that whiten all the land,
My former deeds and triumphs, tell
Beneath these jaws what numbers fell.

True, says the Man, the strength I saw
Might well the brutal nation awe :
But shall a monarch, brave like you,
Place glory in so false a view ?
Robbers invade their neighbour's right.
Be lov'd : let justice bound your might.
Mean are ambitious heroes, boasts
Of wasted lands and slaughter'd hosts.
Pirates their pow'r by murders gain,
Wise kings by love and mercy reign.
To me your clemency hath shown
The virtue worthy of a throne.
Heav'n gives you pow'r above the rest,
Like Heav'n to succour the distress.

The case is plain, the Monarch said ;
False glory hath my youth misled ;

For beasts of prey, a servile train,
Have been the flatt'ers of my reign.
You reason well. Yet tell me, friend,
Did ever you in courts attend ?
For all my fawning rogues agree,
That human heroes rule like me.

FABLE II.

THE SPANIEL AND THE CAMELEON.

A SPANIEL, bred with all the care
That waits upon a fav'rite heir,
Ne'er felt correction's rigid hand ;
Indulg'd to disobey command,
In pamper'd ease his hours were spent ;
He never knew what learning meant.
Such forward airs, so pert, so smart,
Were sure to win his lady's heart ;
Each little mischief gain'd him praise ;
How pretty were his fawning ways !

The wind was south, the morning fair,
He ventures forth to take the air.
He ranges all the meadow round,
And rolls upon the softest ground :

When near him a cameleon seen,
Was scarce distinguish'd from the green.

Dear emblem of the flatt'ring host,
What, live with clowns ! a genius lost !
To cities and the court repair :
A fortune cannot fail thee there :
Preferment shall thy talents crown,
Believe me, friend ; I know the town.

Sir, says the Sycophant, like you,
Of old, politer life I knew :
Like you, a courtier born and bred,
Kings lean'd their ear to what I said.
My whisper always met success ;
The ladies prais'd me for address.
I knew to hit each courtier's passion,
And flatter'd ev'ry vice in fashion.
But JOVE, who hates the liar's ways,
At once cut short my prosp'rous days ;

And, sentenc'd to retain my nature,
Transform'd me to this crawling creature.
Doom'd to a life obscure and mean,
I wander in the sylvan scene.
For Jove the heart alone regards ;
He punishes what man rewards.
How different is thy case and mine !
With men at least you sup and dine ;
While I, condemn'd to thinnest fare,
Like those I flatter'd, feed on air.

FABLE III.

THE MOTHER, THE NURSE, AND THE FAIRY.

GIVE me a son. The blessing sent,
Were ever parents more content ?

How partial are their doting eyes !

No child is half so fair and wise.

Wak'd to the morning's pleasing care,
The Mother rose, and sought her heir.

She saw the Nurse, like one possess'd,
With wringing hands, and sobbing breast

Sure some disaster hath befel :

Speak, Nurse ; I hope the boy is well.

Dear Madam, think not me to blame ;

Invisible the Fairy came :

Your precious babe is hence convey'd,

And in the place a changeling laid.

Where are the father's mouth and nose,

The mother's eyes, as black as sloes ?

See here, a shocking awkward creature,

That speaks a fool in ev'ry feature.

(The woman's blind, the Mother cries ;)

I see wit sparkle in his eyes.

Lord ! Madam, what a squinting leer ;

No doubt the Fairy hath been here.

Just as she spoke, a Pigmy Sprite

Pops through the key-hole, swift as light ;

Perch'd on the cradle's top he stands,

And thus her folly reprimands.

Whence sprung the vain conceited lie,

That we the world with fools supply ?

What ! give our sprightly race away,
For the dull helpless sons of clay !
Besides, by partial fondness shown,
Like you we dote upon our own.
Where yet was ever found a mother,
Who'd give her booby for another ?
And should we change with human breed,
Well might we pass for fools indeed.

FABLE IV.

THE EAGLE, AND THE ASSEMBLY OF ANIMALS.

AS JUPITER'S all-seeing eye
Survey'd the worlds beneath the sky,
From this small speck of earth were sent
Murmurs and sounds of discontent ;
For ev'ry thing alive complain'd,
That he the hardest life sustain'd.
JOVE calls his Eagle. At the word
Before him stands the royal bird.

The bird, obedient, from heav'n's height,
Downward directs his rapid flight ;
Then cited ev'ry living thing,
To hear the mandates of his king.

Ungrateful creatures, whence arise
These murmurs which offend the skies ?
Why this disorder ? say the cause :
For just are JOVE's eternal laws.
Let each his discontent reveal.
To yon sour Dog I first appeal.

Hard is my lot, the Hound replies
On what fleet nerves the Greyhound flies !
While I, with weary step and slow,
O'er plains and vales, and mountains go.
The morning sees my chase begun,
Nor ends it till the setting sun.

When (says the Greyhound) I pursue,
My game is lost, or caught in view ;
Beyond my sight the prey's secure :
The Hound is slow, but always sure.
And had I his sagacious scent,
JOVE ne'er had heard my discontent.

The Lion crav'd the Fox's art ;
The Fox, the Lion's force and heart.
The Cock implor'd the Pigeon's flight,
Whose wings were rapid, strong, and light :
The Pigeon strength of wing despis'd,
And the Cock's matchless valour priz'd :
The Fishes wish'd to graze the plain ;
The Beasts to skim beneath the main.
Thus, envious of another's state,
Each blam'd the partial hand of Fate.

The bird of heav'n then cried aloud,
JOVE bids disperse the murm'ring crowd ;
The God rejects your idle pray'rs.
Would ye, rebellious mutineers,
Entirely change your name and nature,
And be the very envy'd creature ?
What, silent all, and none consent !
Be happy then, and learn content :
Nor imitate the restless mind,
And proud ambition of mankind.

FABLE V.

THE WILD BOAR AND THE RAM.

A GAINST an elm a sheep was tied,
The butcher's knife in blood was died :
The patient flock, in silent fright,
From far beheld the horrid sight.
A savage Boar, who near them stood,
Thus mock'd to scorn the fleecy brood.

All cowards should be serv'd like you.
See, see, your murd'rer is in view :
With purple hands and reeking knife,
He strips the skin yet warm with life.
Your quarter'd sires, your bleeding dams,
The dying bleat of harmless lambs,
Call for revenge. O stupid race !
The heart that wants revenge is base.

I grant, an ancient Ram replies,
We bear no terror in our eyes ;
Yet think us not of soul so tame,
Which no repeated wrongs inflame ;

Insensible of ev'ry ill,
Because we want thy tusks to kill.
Know, those who violence pursue,
Give to themselves the vengeance due,
For in these massacres they find
The two chief plagues that waste mankind.
Our skin supplies the wrangling bar ;
It wakes their slumb'ring sons to war ;
And well revenge may rest contented,
Since drums and parchment were invented.

FABLE VI.

THE MISER AND PLUTUS.

THE wind was high, the window shakes ;
With sudden start the Miser wakes ;
Along the silent room he stalks ;
Looks back, and trembles as he walks !
Each lock and ev'ry bolt he tries,
In ev'ry creek and corner pries,

Then opes the chest with treasure stor'd
And stands in rapture o'er his hoard ;
But now, with sudden qualms possest,
He wrings his hands, he beats his breast.
By conscience stung, he wildly stares ;
And thus his guilty soul declares.

Had the deep earth her stores confin'd,
This heart had known sweet peace of mind.
But virtue's sold. Good Gods ! what price
Can recompense the pangs of vice !
O bane of good ! seducing cheat !
Can man, weak man, thy pow'r defeat ?
Gold banish'd honour from the mind,
And only left the name behind ;
Gold sow'd the world with ev'ry ill ;
Gold taught the murd'rer's sword to kill :
'Twas gold instructed coward hearts,
In treachery's more pernicious arts.
Who can recount the mischiefs o'er ?
Virtue resides on earth no more !

He spoke, and sigh'd. In angry mood,
Plutus, his god, before him stood.

The Miser trembling, lock'd his chest ;
The Vision frown'd, and thus address.

Whence is this vile ungrateful rant ?
Each sordid rascal's daily cant.
Did I, base wretch, corrupt mankind ?
The fault's in thy rapacious mind.
Because my blessings are abus'd,
Must I be censur'd, curs'd, accus'd ?
Ev'n virtue's self by knaves is made
A cloak to carry on the trade ;
And pow'r (when lodg'd in their possession)
Grows tyranny, and rank oppression.
Thus, when the villain crams his chest,
Gold is the canker of the breast ;
'Tis avarice, insolence, and pride,
And every shocking vice beside.
But when to virtuous hands 'tis given,
It blesses, like the dews of heav'n :
Like heav'n, it hears the orphans' cries,
And wipes the tears from widows' eyes ;
Their crimes on gold shall misers lay,
Who pawn'd their sordid souls for pay ?

Let bravoës then (when blood is spilt)
Upbraid the passive sword with guilt.

FABLE VII.

THE LION, THE FOX, AND THE GEESE.

A LION, tir'd with state affairs,
Quite sick of pomp, and worn with cares,
Resolv'd (remote from noise and strife)
In peace to pass his latter life.

It was proclaim'd ; the day was set ;
Behold the gen'ral council met.
The Fox was Viceroy nam'd. The crowd
To the new Regent humbly bow'd.
Wolves, bears, and mighty tigers bend,
And strive who most shall condescend.
He straight assumes a solemn grace,
Collects his wisdom in his face.
The crowd admire his wit, his sense :
Each word hath weight and consequence.

The flatt'rer all his art displays :
He who hath power, is sure of praise.
A Fox stept forth before the rest,
And thus the servile throng address.

How vast his talents, born to rule,
And train'd in virtue's honest school !
What clemency his temper sways !
How uncorrupt are all his ways !
Beneath his conduct and command,
Rapine shall cease to waste the land.
His brain hath stratagem and art ;
Prudence and mercy rule his heart ;
What blessings must attend the nation
Under this good administration !

He said. A Goose who distant stood,
Harangu'd apart the cackling brood.

Whene'er I hear a knave commend,
He bids me shun his worthy friend.
What praise ! what mighty commendation !
But 'twas a Fox who spoke th' oration.
Foxes this government may prize,
As gentle, plentiful, and wise ;

If they enjoy the sweets, 'tis plain
We Geese must feel a tyrant reign.
What havoc now shall thin our race,
When ev'ry petty clerk in place,
To prove his taste and seem polite,
Will feed on Geese both noon and night !

FABLE VIII.

THE LADY AND THE WASP.

WHAT whispers must the Beauty bear !
What hourly nonsense haunts her ear !
Where'er her eyes dispense their charms,
Impertinence around her swarms.
Did not the tender nonsense strike,
Contempt and scorn might look dislike,
Forbidding airs might thin the place,
The slightest flap a fly can chase.
But who can drive the num'rous breed ?
Chase one, another will succeed.

Who knows a fool, must know his brother ;
One fop will recommend another :
And with this plague she's rightly curst,
Because she listen'd to the first.

As DORIS, at her toilet's duty,
Sat meditating on her beauty,
She now was pensive, now was gay,
And loll'd the sultry hours away.

As thus in indolence she lies,
A giddy Wasp around her flies :
He now advances, now retires,
Now to her neck and cheek aspires.
Her fan in vain defends her charms ;
Swift he returns, again alarms ;
For by repulse he bolder grew,
Perch'd on her lip, and sipt the dew.

She frowns, she frets. Good Gods! she cries,
Protect me from these teasing flies !
Of all the plagues that heav'n hath sent,
A Wasp is most impertinent.

The hov'ring insect thus complain'd ;
Am I then slighted, scorn'd, disdain'd ?

Can such offence your anger wake ?
'Twas beauty caus'd the bold mistake.
Those cherry lips that breathe perfume,
That cheek so ripe with youthful bloom,
Made me with strong desire pursue
The fairest peach that ever grew.

Strike him not, JENNY, DORIS cries,
Nor murder Wasps like vulgar flies :
For though he's free (to do him right)
The creature's civil and polite.

In ecstasies away he posts ;
Where'er he came, the favour boasts ;
Braggs how her sweetest tea he sips,
And shows the sugar on his lips.

The hint alarm'd the forward crew.
Sure of success, away they flew.
They share the dainties of the day,
Round her with airy music play ;
And now they flutter, now they rest,
Now soar again, and skim her breast.
Nor were they banish'd, till she found
That Wasps have stings, and felt the wound.

FABLE IX.

THE BULL AND THE MASTIFF.

SEEK you to train your fav'rite boy ?
Each caution, ev'ry care employ :
And ere you venture to confide,
Let his preceptor's heart be tried :
Weigh well his manners, life and scope ;
On these depends thy future hope.
As on a time, in peaceful reign,
A Bull enjoy'd the flow'ry plain,
A Mastiff pass'd ; inflam'd with ire,
His eye-balls shot indignant fire ;
He foam'd, he rag'd with thirst of blood.
Spurning the ground the monarch stood,
And roar'd aloud, Suspend the fight ;
In a whole skin go sleep to-night :
Or tell me, ere the battle rage,
What wrongs provoke thee to engage ?
Is it ambition fires thy breast,
Or avarice that ne'er can rest ?

From these alone unjustly springs
The world-destroying wrath of kings.

The surly Mastiff thus returns,
Within my bosom glory burns.
Like heroes of eternal name,
Whom poets sing, I fight for fame.
The butcher's spirit-stirring mind
To daily war my youth inclin'd ;
He train'd me to heroic deed ;
Taught me to conquer, or to bleed.

Curs'd Dog, the Bull reply'd, no more
I wonder at thy thirst of gore ;
For thou (beneath a butcher train'd,
Whose hands with cruelty are stain'd,
His daily murders in thy view)
Must, like thy tutor, blood pursue.
Take then thy fate. With goring wound,
At once he lifts him from the ground ;
Aloft the sprawling hero flies,
Mangled he falls, he howls, and dies.

FABLE X.

THE ELEPHANT AND THE BOOKSELLER.

THE man who with undaunted toils,
Sails unknown seas to unknown soils,
With various wonders feasts his sight :
What stranger wonders does he write !
We read, and in description view
Creatures which ADAM never knew :
For, when we risk no contradiction,
It prompts the tongue to deal in fiction.
Those things that startle me or you,
I grant are strange ; yet may be true.
Who doubts that Elephants are found
For science and for sense renown'd ?
BORRI records their strength of parts,
Extent of thought, and skill in arts ;
How they perform the law's decrees,
And save the state the hangman's fees ;
And how by travel understand
The language of another land.

Let those, who question this report,
To PLINY'S ancient page resort.
How learn'd was that sagacious breed !
Who now (like them) the Greek can read !

As one of these, in days of yore,
Rummag'd a shop of learning o'er ;
Not, like our modern dealers, minding
Only the margin's breadth and binding ;
A book his curious eye detains,
Where, with exactest care and pains,
Were ev'ry beast and bird portray'd,
That e'er the search of man survey'd.
Their natures and their powers were writ,
With all the pride of human wit.
The page he with attention spread,
And thus remark'd on what he read.

Man with strong reason is endow'd ;
A beast scarce instinct is allow'd.
But let this author's worth be tried,
'Tis plain that neither was his guide.
Can he discern the diff'rent natures,
And weigh the power of other creatures,

Who by the partial work hath shown
He knows so little of his own ?
How falsely is the spaniel drawn !
Did man from him first learn to fawn ?
A dog proficient in the trade !
He the chief flatt'rer nature made !
Go, Man, the ways of courts discern ;
You'll find a spaniel still might learn.
How can the fox's theft and plunder
Provoke his censure or his wonder ?
From courtiers' tricks, and lawyers' arts,
The fox might well improve his parts.
The lion, wolf, and tiger's brood,
He curses, for their thirst of blood :
But is not man to man a prey ?
Beasts kill for hunger, men for pay.

The Bookseller, who heard him speak,
And saw him turn a page of Greek,
Thought, what a genius have I found !
Then thus address'd with bow profound.

Learn'd Sir, if you'd employ your pen
Against the senseless sons of men,

Or write the History of Siam,
No man is better pay than I am ;
Or, since you're learn'd in Greek, let's see
Something against the Trinity.

When wrinkling with a sneer his trunk,
Friend, quoth the Elephant, you're drunk ;
E'en keep your money, and be wise :
Leave man on man to criticise ;
For that you ne'er can want a pen
Among the senseless sons of men.
They unprovok'd will court the fray :
Envy's a sharper spur than pay.
No author ever spar'd a brother ;
Wits are game-cocks to one another.

FABLE XI.

THE PEACOCK, THE TURKEY, AND THE GOOSE.

IN beauty faults conspicuous grow ;
The smallest speck is seen on snow.
As near a barn, by hunger led,
A Peacock with the poultry fed ;
All view'd him with an envious eye,
And mock'd his gaudy pageantry.
He, conscious of superior merit,
Contemns their base reviling spirit ;
His state and dignity assumes,
And to the sun displays his plumes ;
Which, like the heav'n's o'erarching skies,
(Are spangled with a thousand eyes.)
The circling rays, and varied light,
At once confound their dazzled sight :
On ev'ry tongue detraction burns,
And malice prompts their spleen by turns.
Mark, with what insolence and pride,
The creature takes his haughty stride !

The Turkey cries. Can spleen contain ?
Sure never bird was half so vain !
But were intrinsic merit seen,
We Turkeys have the whiter skin.

From tongue to tongue they caught abuse ;
And next was heard the hissing Goose.
What hideous legs ! what filthy claws !
I scorn to censure little flaws !
Then what a horrid squalling throat !
Ev'n owls are frightened at the note.

True. Those are faults, the Peacock cries ;
My scream, my shanks you may despise :
But such blind critics rail in vain :
What, overlook my radiant train !
Know, did my legs (your scorn and sport),
The Turkey or the Goose support,
And did ye scream with harsher sound,
Those faults in you had ne'er been found ?
To all apparent beauties blind,
Each blemish strikes an envious mind.

Thus in assemblies have I seen
A nymph of brightest charms and mien,

Wake envy in each ugly face ;
And buzzing scandal fills the place.

FABLE XII.

CUPID, HYMEN, AND PLUTUS.

AS Cupid in Cythera's grove
Employ'd the lesser powers of love ;
Some shape the bow, or fit the string ;
Some give the taper shaft its wing,
Or turn the polish'd quiver's mould,
Or head the darts with temper'd gold.

Amidst their toil and various care,
Thus Hymen, with assuming air,
Address'd the God. Thou purblind chit,
Of awkward and ill-judging wit,
If matches are not better made,
At once I must forswear my trade.
You send me such ill-coupled folks,
That 'tis a shame to sell them yokes.

They squabble for a pin, a feather,
And wonder how they came together.
The husband's sullen, dogged, shy,
The wife grows flippant in reply ;
He loves command and due restriction,
And she as well likes contradiction :
She never slavishly submits ;
She'll have her will, or have her fits.
He this way tugs, she t'other draws :
The man grows jealous, and with cause.
Nothing can save him but divorce ;
And here the wife complies of course.

When, says the Boy, had I to do
With either your affairs or you ?
I never idly spent my darts ;
You trade in mercenary hearts.
For settlements the lawyer's fee'd ;
Is my hand witness to the deed ?
If they like cat and dog agree,
Go rail at Plutus, not at me.

Plutus appear'd, and said, 'Tis true,
In marriage, gold is all their view :

They seek not beauty, wit, or sense ;
And love is seldom the pretence.
All offer incense at my shrine,
And I alone the bargain sign.
How can BELINDA blame her fate ?
She only ask'd a great estate.
DORIS was rich enough, 'tis true ;
Her lord must give her title too :
And ev'ry man, or rich or poor,
A fortune asks, and asks no more.
Av'rice, whatever shape it bears,
Must still be coupled with its cares.

FABLE XIII.

THE TAME STAG.

AS a young Stag the thicket past,
The branches held his antlers fast ;
A clown, who saw the captive hung,
Across the horns his halter flung.

At length the treach'rous snare was laid ;
Poor Pug was caught, to town convey'd,
There sold. How envied was his doom,
Made captive in a lady's room !
Proud as a lover of his chains,
He day by day her favour gains.
Whene'er the duty of the day,
The toilet, calls—with mimic play
He twirls her knots, he cracks her fan,
Like any other gentleman.
In visits, too, his parts and wit,
When jests grew dull, were sure to hit.
Proud with applause, he thought his mind
In ev'ry courtly art refin'd ;
Like ORPHEUS burned with public zeal
To civilize the monkey weal :
So watch'd occasion, broke his chain,
And sought his native woods again.
The hairy sylvans round him press,
Astonish'd at his strut and dress.
Some praise his sleeve ; and others glote
Upon his rich embroider'd coat ;

His dapper periwig commending,
With the black tail behind depending ;
His powder'd back, above, below,
Like hoary frost, or fleecy snow ;
But all with envy and desire,
His flutt'ring shoulder-knot admire.

Hear and improve ; he pertly cries ;
I come to make a nation wise.
Weigh your own words ; support your place,
The next in rank to human race.
In cities long I pass'd my days,
Convers'd with men, and learnt their ways.
Their dress, their courtly manners see ;
Reform your state and copy me.
Seek ye to thrive ? In flatt'ry deal ;
Your scorn, your hate, with that conceal.
Seem only to regard your friends,
But use them for your private ends.
Stint not to truth the flow of wit ;
Be prompt to lie whene'er 'tis fit.
Bend all your force to spatter merit ;
Scandal is conversation's spirit.

Boldly to ev'ry thing pretend,
And men your talents shall commend.
I knew the Great. Observe me right ;
So shall you grow like man polite.

He spoke and bow'd. With mutt'ring jaws
The wond'ring circle grinn'd applause.

Now, warm with malice, envy, spite,
Their most obliging friends they bite ;
And fond to copy human ways,
Practise new mischiefs all their days.

Thus the dull lad, too tall for school,
With travel finishes the fool ;
Studious of ev'ry coxcomb's airs,
He drinks, games, dresses, whores, and swears;
O'erlooks with scorn all virtuous arts,
For vice is fitted to his parts.

FABLE XV.

THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE PHEASANTS.

THE Sage, awak'd at early day,
Through the deep forest took his way ;
Drawn by the music of the groves,
Along the winding gloom he roves :
From tree to tree, the warbling throats
Prolong the sweet alternate notes.
But where he past, he terror threw,
The song broke short, the warblers flew ;
The thrushes chatter'd with affright,
And nightingales abhorr'd his sight ;
All animals before him ran,
To shun the hateful sight of man.

Whence is this dread of ev'ry creature ?
Fly they our figure or our nature ?

As thus he walk'd in musing thought,
His ear imperfect accents caught ;
With cautious step he nearer drew,
By the thick shade conceal'd from view.

High on the branch a Pheasant stood,
Around her all her list'ning brood ;
Proud of the blessings of her nest,
She thus a mother's care express'd
No dangers here shall circumvent,
Within the woods enjoy content.
Sooner the hawk or vulture trust,
Than man ; of animals the worst :
In him ingratitude you find,
A vice peculiar to the kind.
The sheep whose annual fleece is dy'd,
To guard his health, and serve his pride,
Forc'd from his fold and native plain,
Is in the cruel shambles slain.
The swarms, who, with industrious skill,
His hives with wax and honey fill,
In vain whole summer days employ'd,
Their stores are sold, their race destroy'd
What tribute from the goose is paid !
Does not her wing all science aid !
Does it not lovers' hearts explain,
And drudge to raise the merchant's gain ?

What now rewards this general use ?
He takes the quills, and eats the goose.
Man then avoid, detest his ways ;
So safety shall prolong your days.
When services are thus acquitted,
Be sure we Pheasants must be spitted.

FABLE XVI.

THE PIN AND THE NEEDLE.

A PIN, who long had serv'd a beauty,
Proficient in the toilet's duty,
Had form'd her sleeve, confin'd her hair,
Or giv'n her knot a smarter air,
Now nearest to her heart was plac'd,
Now in her mantua's tail disgrac'd :
But could she partial fortune blame,
Who saw her lovers serv'd the same ?
At length from all her honours cast ;
Through various turns of life she past ;

Now glitter'd on a tailor's arm ;
Now kept a beggar's infant warm ;
Now, rang'd within a miser's coat,
Contributes to his yearly groat ;
Now, rais'd again from low approach,
She visits in the doctor's coach ;
Here, there, by various fortune tost,
At last in Gresham Hall was lost.

Charm'd with the wonders of the show,
On every side, above, below,
She now of this or that enquires,
What least was understood admires.
'Tis plain, each thing so struck her mind.
Her head's of virtuoso kind.

And pray what's this, and this, dear Sir ?
A Needle, says the interpreter.
She knew the name. And thus the fool
Address'd her as a tailor's tool,

A Needle with that filthy stone,
Quite idle, all with rust o'ergrown !
You better might employ your parts,
And aid the sempstress in her arts.

But tell me how the friendship grew
Between that paltry flint and you ?

Friend, says the Needle, cease to blame ;
I follow real worth and fame.

Know'st thou the loadstone's pow'r and art,
That virtue virtues can impart ?

Of all his talents I partake,
Who then can such a friend forsake ?

'Tis I direct the pilot's hand
To shun the rocks and treacherous sand ;
By me the distant world is known,
And either India is our own.

Had I with milliners been bred,
What had I been ? the guide of thread ;
And drudg'd as vulgar Needles do,
Of no more consequence than you.

FABLE XVII.

THE SHEPHERD'S DOG AND THE WOLF.

A WOLF, with hunger fierce and bold,
Ravag'd the plains, and thinn'd the fold :
Deep in the wood secure he lay,
The thefts of night regal'd the day.
In vain the shepherd's wakeful care
Had spread the toils, and watch'd the snare :
In vain the dog pursu'd his pace,
The fleet robber mock'd the chase.

As Lightfoot rang'd the forest round,
By chance his foe's retreat he found.
Let us awhile the war suspend,
And reason as from friend to friend.

A truce ? replies the Wolf. 'Tis done.
The Dog the parley thus begun.

How can that strong intrepid mind
Attack a weak defenceless kind ?
Those jaws should prey on nobler food,
And drink the boar's and lion's blood,

Great souls with generous pity melt,
Which coward tyrants never felt.
How harmless is our fleecy care !
Be brave, and let thy mercy spare.

Friend, says the Wolf, the matter weigh ;
Nature design'd us beasts of prey ;
As such, when hunger finds a treat,
'Tis necessary Wolves should eat.
If mindful of the bleating weal,
Thy bosom burn with real zeal ;
Hence, and thy tyrant lord beseech ;
To him repeat the moving speech :
A Wolf eats sheep but now and then ;
Ten thousands are devour'd by men.
(An open foe may prove a curse,
But a pretended friend is worse.

FABLE XVIII.

*THE PAINTER WHO PLEASED NOBODY
AND EVERYBODY.*

LEST men suspect your tale untrue,
Keep probability in view.
The trav'ler leaping o'er those bounds,
The credit of his book confounds.
Who with his tongue hath armies routed,
Makes ev'n his real courage doubted :
But flatt'ry never seems absurd ;
The flatter'd always take your word :
Impossibilities seem just ;
They take the strongest praise on trust.
Hyperboles, tho' ne'er so great,
Will still come short of self-conceit.
So very like a Painter drew,
That ev'ry eye the picture knew ;
He hit complexion, feature, air,
So just, the life itself was there.
No flatt'ry, with his colours laid,
To bloom restor'd the faded maid ;

He gave each muscle all its strength ;
The mouth, the chin, the nose's length.
His honest pencil touch'd with truth,
And mark'd the date of age and youth.

He lost his friends, his practice fail'd ;
Truth should not always be reveal'd ;
In dusty piles his pictures lay,
For no one sent the second pay.

Two bustos, fraught with every grace,
A VENUS' and APOLLO'S face,
He plac'd in view ; resolv'd to please,
Whoever sat, he drew from these ;
From these corrected every feature,
And spirited each awkward creature.

All things were set ; the hour was come,
His pallet ready o'er his thumb,
My Lord appear'd ; and seated right
In proper attitude and light,
The painter looked, he sketch'd the piece,
Then dipt his pencil, talk'd of Greece,
Of TITIAN'S tints, of GUIDO'S air ;
Those eyes, my Lord, the spirit there

Might well a Raphael's hand require,
To give them all the native fire ;
The features fraught with sense and wit,
You'll grant are very hard to hit ;
But yet with patience you shall view
As much as paint and art can do.

Observe the work. My Lord replied,
Till now I thought my mouth was wide ;
Besides, my nose is somewhat long ;
Dear sir, for me, 'tis far too young.

Oh ! pardon me, the artist cried,
In this we painters must decide.
The piece ev'n common eyes must strike,
I warrant it extremely like.

My Lord examin'd it a-new ;
No looking-glass seemed half so true.

A Lady came, with borrow'd grace
He from his VENUS form'd her face.
Her lover prais'd the painter's art ;
So like the picture in his heart !
To ev'ry age some charm he lent ;
Ev'n Beauties were almost content.

Through all the town his art they prais'd;
His custom grew, his price was rais'd.
Had he the real likeness shown,
Would any man the picture own?
But when thus happily he wrought,
Each found the likeness in his thought.

FABLE XIX.

THE LION AND THE CUB.

HOW fond are men of rule and place,
Who court it from the mean and base!
These cannot bear an equal nigh,
But from superior merit fly.
They love the cellar's vulgar joke,
And lose their hours in ale and smoke.
There o'er some petty club preside;
So poor, so paltry is their pride!
Nay, ev'n with fools whole nights will sit,
In hopes to be supreme in wit.

If these can read, to these I write,
To set their worth in truest light.

A Lion-cub, of sordid mind,
Avoided all the lion kind ;
Fond of applause, he sought the feasts
Of vulgar and ignoble beasts ;
With asses all his time he spent,
Their club's perpetual president.
He caught their manners, looks, and airs ;
An ass in everything, but ears !
If ere his highness meant a joke,
They grinn'd applause before he spoke ;
But at each word what shouts of praise !
Good Gods ! how natural he brays !

Elate with flatt'ry and conceit,
He seeks his royal sire's retreat ;
Forward, and fond to show his parts,
His highness brays ; the lion starts.

Puppy, that curs'd vociferation
Betrays thy life and conversation :
Coxcombs, an ever-noisy race,
Are trumpets of their own disgrace.

Why so severe ? the cub replies :
Our senate always held me wise.
How weak is pride ! returns the sire ;
All fools are vain, when fools admire !
But know what stupid asses prize,
Lions and noble beasts despise.

FABLE XX.

THE OLD HEN AND THE COCK.

RESTRAIN your child ; you'll soon believe
The text which says we sprung from Eve.
As an old hen led forth her train,
And seem'd to peck to shew the grain ;
She rak'd the chaff, she scratch'd the ground,
And glean'd the spacious yard around.
A giddy chick, to try her wings,
On the well's narrow margin springs,
And prone she drops. The mother's breast
All day with sorrow was possess'd.

A Cock she met ; her son she knew ;
And in her heart affection grew.

My son, says she, I grant your years
Have reach'd beyond a Mother's cares ;
I see you vig'rous, strong, and bold ;
I hear with joy your triumphs told.
'Tis not from Cocks thy fate I dread ;
But let thy ever-wary tread
Avoid yon well ; that fatal place
Is sure perdition to our race.
Print this my counsel on thy breast ;
To the just gods I leave the rest.

He thank'd her care ; yet day by day
His bosom burn'd to disobey ;
And ev'ry time the well he saw,
Scorn'd in his heart the foolish law :
Near and more near each day he drew,
And long'd to try the dang'rous view.

Why was this idle charge ? he cries :
Let courage female fears despise.
Or did she doubt my heart was brave,
And therefore this injunction gave ?

Or does her harvest store the place,
A treasure for her younger race ?
And would she thus my search prevent ?
I stand resolv'd, and dare th' event.

Thus said. He mounts the margin's round,
And pries into the depth profound.
He stretch'd his neck ; and from below
With stretching neck advanc'd a foe :
With wrath his ruffled plumes he rears,
The foe with ruffled plumes appears :
Threat answer'd threat, his fury grew,
Headlong to meet the war he flew,
But when the wat'ry death he found,
He thus lamented as he drown'd :

I ne'er had been in this condition,
But for my mother's prohibition.

FABLE XXI.

THE RAT-CATCHER AND CATS.

THE rats by night such mischief did,
BETTY was ev'ry morning chid.
They undermin'd whole sides of bacon,
Her cheese was sapp'd, her tarts were taken.
Her pasties, fenc'd with thickest paste,
Were all demolish'd, and laid waste.
She curs'd the cat for want of duty,
Who left her foes a constant booty.

An Engineer, of noted skill,
Engag'd to stop the growing ill.

From room to room he now surveys
Their haunts, their works, their secret ways ;
Finds where they 'scape an ambuscade,
And whence the nightly sally's made.

An envious Cat from place to place,
Unseen, attends his silent pace.
She saw, that if his trade went on,
The purring race must be undone ;

So, secretly removes his baits,
And ev'ry stratagem defeats.

Again he sets the poison'd toils,
And Puss again the labour foils.

What foe (to frustrate my designs)
My schemes thus nightly countermines ?
Incens'd, he cries : this very hour
This wretch shall bleed beneath my power.

So said, a pond'rous trap he brought,
And in the fact poor Puss was caught.

Smuggler, says he, thou shalt be made
A victim to our loss of trade.

The captive Cat, with piteous mews,
For pardon, life, and freedom sues.
A sister of the science spare ;
One int'rest is our common care.

What insolence ! the man replied ;
Shall Cats with us the game divide ?
Were all your interloping band
Extinguish'd, or expell'd the land,
We Rat-catchers might raise our fees,
Sole guardians of a nation's cheese !

A Cat, who saw the lifted knife,
Thus spoke, and sav'd her sister's life.

In ev'ry age and clime we see,
Two of a trade can ne'er agree.
Each hates his neighbour for encroaching ;
'Squire stigmatizes 'squire for poaching ;
Beauties with beauties are in arms,
And scandal pelts each other's charms ;
Kings too their neighbour kings dethrone,
In hope to make the world their own.
But let us limit our desires ;
Not war like beauties, kings, and 'squires !
For though we both one prey pursue,
There's game enough for us and you.

FABLE XXII.

THE GOAT WITHOUT A BEARD.

'TIS certain, that the modish passions
Descend among the crowd, like fashions.

Excuse me then ; if pride, conceit,
(The manners of the fair and great)
I give to monkeys, asses, dogs,
Fleas, owls, goats, butterflies, and hogs.
I say that these are proud. What then ?
I never said they equal men !

A Goat (as vain as Goat can be)
Affected singularity.

Whene'er a thymy bank he found,
He roll'd upon the fragrant ground ;
And then with fond attention stood,
Fix'd o'er his image in the flood.

I hate my frowzy beard, he cries ;
My youth is lost in this disguise.
[Did not the females know my vigour,
Well might they loath this rev'rend figure.

Resolv'd to smooth his shaggy face,
He sought the barber of the place.
A flippan't monkey, spruce and smart,
Hard by, profess'd the dapper art :
His pole, with pewter basins hung,
Black rotten teeth in order strung,
Rang'd cups that in the window stood,
Lin'd with red rags, to look like blood,
Did well his threefold trade explain,
Who shav'd, drew teeth, and breath'd a vein.

The Goat he welcomes with an air,
And seats him in his wooden chair :
Mouth, nose, and cheek, the lather hides :
Light, smooth, and swift, the razor glides.

I hope your custom, Sir, says Pug.
Sure never face was half so smug.

The Goat impatient for applause,
Swift to the neighbouring hill withdraws ;
The shaggy people grinn'd and star'd.

Heighday ! what's here ? without a beard !
Say, brother, whence the dire disgrace ?
What envious hand hath robb'd your face ?

When thus the fop with smiles of scorn :
Are beards by civil nations worn ?
Ev'n Muscovites have mow'd their chins.
Shall we, like formal Capuchins,
Stubborn in pride, retain the mode,
And bear about the hairy load ?
Whene'er we through the village stray ;
Are we not mock'd along the way ;
Insulted with loud shouts of scorn,
By boys our beards disgrac'd and torn ?

Were you no more with Goats to dwell,
Brother, I grant you reason well,
Replies a bearded chief. Beside,
If boys can mortify thy pride,
How wilt thou stand the ridicule
Of our whole flock ? affected fool !
Coxcombs, distinguish'd from the rest,
To all but coxcombs are a jest.

FABLE XXIII.

THE OLD WOMAN AND HER CATS.

WHO friendship with a knave hath made,
Is judg'd a partner in the trade.

The matron, who conducts abroad
A willing nymph, is thought a bawd ;
And if a modest girl is seen
With one who cures a lover's spleen,
We guess her, not extremely nice,
And only wish to know her price.
'Tis thus that on the choice of friends
Our good or evil name depends.

A wrinkled Hag, of wicked fame,
Beside a little smoky flame
Sat hov'ring, pinch'd with age and frost ;
Her shrivell'd hands, with veins emboss'd,
Upon her knees her weight sustain,
While palsy shook her crazy brain :
She mumbles forth her backward pray'rs,
An untam'd scold of fourscore years.

About her swarm'd a num'rous brood
Of Cats, who lank with hunger mew'd.

Teas'd with their cries, her choler grew,
And thus she sputter'd : Hence, ye crew.
Fool that I was, to entertain
Such imps, such fiends, a hellish train !
Had ye been never hous'd and nurs'd,
I, for a witch, had ne'er been curs'd.
To you I owe, that crowds of boys
Worry me with eternal noise ;
Straws laid across, my pace retard ;
The horse-shoe's nail'd (each threshold's guard) ;
The stunted broom the wenches hide,
For fear that I should up and ride ;
They stick with pins my bleeding seat,
And bid me shew my secret teat.

To hear you prate would vex a saint ;
Who hath most reason of complaint ?
Replies a Cat. Let's come to proof.
Had we ne'er starv'd beneath your roof,
We had, like others of our race,
In credit liv'd, as beasts of chase.

'Tis infamy to serve a hag ;
Cats are thought imps, her broom a nag ;
And boys against our lives combine,
Because, 'tis said, your cats have nine.

FABLE XXIV.

THE BUTTERFLY AND THE SNAIL.

ALL upstarts insolent in place,
Remind us of their vulgar race.

As, in the sunshine of the morn,
A Butterfly (but newly born)
Sat proudly perking on a rose,
With pert conceit his bosom glows ;
His wings (all-glorious to behold)
Bedropt with azure, jet, and gold,
Wide he displays ; (the spangled dew)
Reflects his eyes, and various hue.

His now-forgotten friend a Snail,
Beneath his house, (with slimy trail

Crawls o'er the grass ; whom when he spies,
In wrath he to the gard'ner cries :

What means yon peasant's daily toil,
From choking weeds to rid the soil ?
Why wake you to the morning's care ?
Why with new arts correct the year ?
Why glows the peach with crimson hue ?
And why the plum's inviting blue ?
Were they to feast his taste design'd,
That vermin of voracious kind ?
Crush then the slow, the pilf'ring race ;
So purge thy garden from disgrace.

What arrogance ! the Snail replied ;
How insolent is upstart pride !
Had'st thou not thus with insult vain,
Provok'd my patience to complain,
I had conceal'd thy meaner birth,
Nor trac'd thee to the scum of earth.
For scarce nine suns have wak'd the hours,
To swell the fruit, and paint the flow'rs,
Since I thy humbler life survey'd.
In base, in sordid guise array'd ;

A hideous insect, vile, unclean,
You dragg'd a slow and noisome train ;
And from your spider-bowels drew
Foul film, and spun the dirty clue.
I own my humble life, good friend ;
Snail was I born, and Snail shall end.
And what's a Butterfly ? At best,
He's but a caterpillar, drest ;
And all thy race (a numerous seed)
Shall prove of caterpillar breed.

FABLE XXV.

THE SCOLD AND THE PARROT.

THE husband thus reprov'd his wife :
Who deals in slander, lives in strife.
Art thou the herald of disgrace,
Denouncing war to all thy race ?
Can nothing quell thy thunder's rage,
Which spares nor friend, nor sex, nor age ?

That vixen tongue of yours, my dear,
Alarms our neighbours far and near.
Good Gods ! 'tis like a rolling river,
That murm'ring flows, and flows for ever !
Ne'er tir'd, perpetual discord sowing !
Like fame, it gathers strength by going.

Heighday ! the flippant tongue replies,
How solemn is the fool, how wise !
Is nature's choicest gift debarr'd ?
Nay, frown not ; for I will be heard.
Women of late are finely ridden,
A Parrot's privilege forbidden !
You praise his talk, his squalling song ;
But wives are always in the wrong.

Now reputations flew in pieces
Of mothers, daughters, aunts, and nieces.
She ran the Parrot's language o'er,
Bawd, hussy, drunkard, slattern, whore ;
On all the sex she vents her fury,
Tries and condemns without a jury.

At once the torrent of her words
Alarm'd cat, monkey, dogs, and birds :

All join their forces to confound her ;
Puss spits, the monkey chatters round her ;
The yelping cur her heels assaults ;
The magpie blabs out all her faults ;
Poll, in the uproar, from his cage,
With this rebuke out-scream'd her rage.

A Parrot is for talking priz'd,
But prattling women are despis'd.
She who attacks another's honour,
Draws every living thing upon her.
Think, Madam, when you stretch your lungs,
That all your neighbours too have tongues.
One slander must ten thousand get,
The world with int'rest pays the debt.

FABLE XXVI.

THE CUR AND THE MASTIFF.

A SNEAKING Cur, the master's spy,
Rewarded for his daily lie,
With secret jealousies and fears
Set all together by the ears.
Poor Puss to-day was in disgrace,
Another cat supplied her place ;
The hound was beat, the Mastiff chid,
The monkey was the room forbid ;
Each to his dearest friend grew shy,
And none could tell the reason why.

A plan to rob the house was laid,
The thief with love seduc'd the maid ;
Cajol'd the Cur, and strok'd his head,
And bought his secrecy with bread.
He next the Mastiff's honour tried,
Whose honest jaws the bribe defied.
He stretch'd his hand to proffer more ;
The surly dog his fingers tore.

Swift ran the Cur ; with indignation
The master took his information.
Hang him, the villain's curs'd, he cries ;
And round his neck the halter ties.

The Dog his humble suit preferr'd,
And begg'd in justice to be heard.
The master sat. On either hand
The cited dogs confronting stand ;
The Cur the bloody tale relates,
And, like a lawyer, aggravates.

Judge not unheard, the Mastiff cried,
But weigh the cause of either side.
Think not that treach'ry can be just,
Take not informers' words on trust.
They ope their hand to ev'ry pay,
And you and me by turns betray.

He spoke. And all the truth appear'd
The Cur was hang'd, the Mastiff clear'd.

FABLE XXVII.

THE SICK MAN AND THE ANGEL.

IS there no hope ? the sick man said.

The silent doctor shook his head,
And took his leave with signs of sorrow,
Despairing of his fee to-morrow.

When thus the Man with gasping breath ;
I feel the chilling wound of death :
Since I must bid the world adieu,
Let me my former life review.
I grant, my bargains well were made,
But all men overreach in trade ;
'Tis self-defence in each profession,
Sure self-defence is no transgression.
The little portion in my hands,
By good security on lands,
Is well increas'd. If unawares,
My justice to myself and heirs,
Hath let my debtor rot in jail,
For want of good sufficient bail ;

If I by writ, or bond, or deed,
Reduc'd a family to need,
My will hath made the world amends ;
My hope on charity depends.
When I am number'd with the dead,
And all my pious gifts are read,
By heav'n and earth 'twill then be known,
My charities were amply shown.

 An Angel came. Ah, friend ! he cried,
No more in flatt'ring hope confide.
Can thy good deeds in former times
Outweigh the balance of thy crimes ?
What widow or what orphan prays
To crown thy life with length of days ?
A pious action's in thy power ;
Embrace with joy the happy hour.
Now, while you draw the vital air,
Prove your intention is sincere.
This instant give a hundred pound ;
Your neighbours want, and you abound.

 But why such haste, the sick man whines ;
Who knows as yet what heav'n designs ?

Perhaps I may recover still,
That sum and more are in my will.

Fool, says the Vision, now 'tis plain,
Your life, your soul, your heav'n was gain ;
From every side, with all your might,
You scrap'd, and scrap'd beyond your right ;
And after death would fain atone,
By giving what is not your own.

While there is life, there's hope, he cried ;
Then why such haste ? so groan'd and died.

FABLE XXVIII.

THE PERSIAN, THE SUN, AND THE CLOUD.

IS there a bard whom genius fires,
Whose ev'ry thought the God inspires ?
When Envy reads the nervous lines,
She frets, she rails, she raves, she pines ;
Her hissing snakes with venom swell ;
She calls her venal train from hell :

The servile fiends her nod obey,
And all CURLL'S authors are in pay.
Fame calls up calumny and spite.
Thus shadow owes its birth to light.

As prostrate to the God of Day,
With heart devout, a Persian lay,
His invocation thus begun.

Parent of light, all-seeing Sun,
Prolific beam, whose rays dispense
The various gifts of providence,
Accept our praise, our daily prayer,
Smile on our fields, and bless the year.

A Cloud, who mock'd his grateful tongue,
The day with sudden darkness hung ;
With pride and envy swell'd, aloud
A voice thus thunder'd from the Cloud.

Weak is this gaudy God of thine,
Whom I at will forbid to shine.
Shall I nor vows, nor incense know ?
Where praise is due, the praise bestow.

With fervent zeal the Persian mov'd,
Thus the proud calumny reprov'd.

It was that God, who claims my pray'r,
Who gave thee birth, and rais'd thee there ;
When o'er his beams the veil is thrown,
Thy substance is but plainer shown.
A passing gale, a puff of wind,
Dispels thy thickest troops combin'd.

The gale arose ; the vapour tost
(The sport of winds) in air was lost ;
The glorious orb the day refines.
Thus envy breaks, thus merit shines.

FABLE XXIX.

THE FOX AT THE POINT OF DEATH.

A FOX, in life's extreme decay,
Weak, sick, and faint, expiring lay ;
All appetite had left his maw,
And age disarm'd his mumbling jaw.
His num'rous race around him stand,
To learn their dying sire's command :

He rais'd his head with whining moan,
And thus was heard the feeble tone.

Ah, sons ! from evil ways depart :
My crimes lie heavy on my heart.
See, see, the murder'd geese appear !
Why are those bleeding turkeys there ?
Why all around this cackling train,
Who haunt my ears for chickens slain ?

The hungry foxes round them star'd,
And for the promis'd feast prepar'd.

Where, Sir, is all this dainty cheer ?
Nor turkey, goose, nor hen is here.
These are the phantoms of your brain,
And your sons lick their lips in vain.

O gluttons ! says the drooping sire,
Restrain inordinate desire.
Your liqu'rish taste you shall deplore,
When peace of conscience is no more.
Does not the hound betray our pace,
And gins and guns destroy our race ?
Thieves dread the searching eye of pow'r,
And never feel the quiet hour.

Old age (which few of us shall know)
Now puts a period to my woe.
Would you true happiness attain,
Let honesty your passions rein ;
So live in credit and esteem,
And the good name you lost, redeem.

The counsel's good, a Fox replies,
Could we perform what you advise.
Think what our ancestors have done ;
A line of thieves from son to son :
To us descends the long disgrace,
And infamy hath mark'd our race.
Though we, like harmless sheep, should feed,
Honest in thought, in word, and deed,
Whatever hen-roost is decreas'd,
We shall be thought to share the feast.
The change shall never be believ'd.
A lost good name is ne'er retriev'd.

Nay then, replies the feeble Fox,
(But hark ! I hear a Hen that clocks)
Go, but be mod'rate in your food ;
A Chicken too might do me good.

FABLE XXX.

THE SETTING-DOG AND THE PARTRIDGE.

THE ranging Dog the stubble tries,
And searches ev'ry breeze that flies ;
The scent grows warm ; with cautious fear
He creeps, and points the covey near ;
The men, in silence, far behind,
Conscious of game, the net unbind.

A Partridge, with experience wise,
The fraudulent preparation spies :
She mocks their toils, alarms her brood ;
The covey springs, and seeks the wood ;
But ere her certain wing she tries,
Thus to the creeping spaniel cries.

Thou fawning slave to man's deceit,
Thou pimp of lux'ry, sneaking cheat,
Of thy whole species thou disgrace,
Dogs should disown thee of their race !
For if I judge their native parts,
They're born with honest open hearts ;

And, ere they served man's wicked ends,
Were gen'rous foes, or real friends.

When thus the Dog with scornful smile :
Secure of wing, thou dar'st revile.
Clowns are to polish'd manners blind,
How ign'rant is the rustic mind !
My worth sagacious courtiers see,
And to preferment rise, like me.
The thriving pimp, who beauty sets,
Hath off' enhanc'd a nation's debts :
Friend sets his friend, without regard ;
And ministers his skill reward :
Thus train'd by man, I learnt his ways,
And growing favour feasts my days

I might have guess'd, the Partridge said,
The place where you were train'd and fed ;
Servants are apt, and in a trice
Ape to a hair their master's vice.
You came from court, you say. Adieu,
She said, and to the covey flew.

FABLE XXXI.

THE UNIVERSAL APPARITION.

A RAKE, by ev'ry passion rul'd,
With ev'ry vice his youth had cool'd ;
Disease his tainted blood assails ;
His spirits droop, his vigour fails :
With secret ills at home he pines,
And, like infirm old age, declines.
As, twing'd with pain, he pensive sits,
And raves, and prays, and swears by fits ;
A ghastly phantom, lean and wan,
Before him rose, and thus began.

My name, perhaps, hath reach'd your ear ;
Attend, and be advis'd by Care.
Nor love, nor honour, wealth, nor pow'r,
Can give the heart a cheerful hour,
When health is lost. Be timely wise :
With health all taste of pleasure flies.

Thus said, the phantom disappears.
The wary counsel wak'd his fears :

He now from all excess abstains,
With physic purifies his veins ;
And, to procure a sober life,
Resolves to venture on a wife.

But now again the Sprite ascends,
Where'er he walks his ear attends ;
Insinuates that beauty's frail,
That perseverance must prevail ;
With jealousies his brain inflames,
And whispers all her lovers' names.
In other hours she represents
His household charge, his annual rents,
Increasing debts, perplexing duns,
And nothing for his younger sons.

Straight all his thought to gain he turns,
And with the thirst of lucre burns.
But when possess'd of fortune's store,
The Spectre haunts him more and more ;
Sets want and misery in view,
Bold thieves and all the murd'ring crew,
Alarms him with eternal frights,
Infests his dream, or wakes his nights.

How shall he chase this hideous guest?
Pow'r may perhaps protect his rest.
To pow'r he rose. Again the Sprite
Besets him morning, noon, and night !
Talks of Ambition's tott'ring seat,
How Envy persecutes the great,
Of rival hate, of treach'rous friends,
And what disgrace his fall attends.

The court he quits to fly from Care,
And seeks the peace of rural air :
His groves, his fields, amus'd his hours ;
He prun'd his trees, he rais'd his flowers.
But Care again his steps pursues ;
Warns him of blasts, of blighting dews,
Of plund'ring insects, snails and rains,
And droughts that starv'd the labour'd plains.
Abroad, at home, the Spectre's there :
In vain we seek to fly from Care.

At length he thus the Ghost address,
Since thou must be my constant guest,
Be kind, and follow me no more ;
For Care by right should go before.

FABLE XXXII.

THE TWO OWLS AND THE SPARROW.

TWO formal Owls together sat,
Conferring thus in solemn chat.
How is the modern taste decay'd !
Where's the respect to wisdom paid ?
Our worth the Grecian sages knew ;
They gave our sires the honour due ;
They weigh'd the dignity of fowls,
And pry'd into the depth of Owls.
Athens, the seat of learned fame,
With gen'ral voice rever'd our name ;
On merit, title was conferr'd,
And all ador'd th' Athenian bird.

Brother, you reason well, replies
The solemn mate, with half-shut eyes ;
Right. Athens was the seat of learning,
And truly wisdom is discerning.
Besides, on Pallas' helm we sit,
The type and ornament of wit :

But now, alas ! we're quite neglected,
And a pert Sparrow's more respected.

A Sparrow, who was lodg'd beside,
O'erhears them soothe each other's pride,
And thus he nimbly vents his heat.

Who meets a fool must find conceit.

I grant, you were at Athens grac'd,
And on Minerva's helm were plac'd ;
But ev'ry bird that wings the sky,
Except an Owl, can tell you why.
From hence they taught their schools to know
How false we judge by outward show ;
That we should never look esteem,
Since fools as wise as you might seem.
Would ye contempt and scorn avoid,
Let your vain-glory be destroy'd :
Humble your arrogance of thought,
Pursue the ways by Nature taught ;
So shall ye find delicious fare,
And grateful farmers praise your care :
So shall sleek mice your chase reward,
And no keen cat find more regard.

FABLE XXXIII.

THE COURTIER AND PROTEUS.

WHENE’ER a courtier’s out of place,
The country shelters his disgrace ;
Where, doom’d to exercise and health,
His house and gardens own his wealth.
He builds new schemes in hopes to gain
The plunder of another reign ;
Like PHILIP’S son, would fain be doing,
And sighs for other realms to ruin.

As one of these (without his wand)
Pensive, along the winding strand
Employed the solitary hour
In projects to regain his pow’r ;
The waves in spreading circles ran,
Proteus arose, and thus began.

Came you from Court ? For in your mien
A self-important air is seen.

He frankly own’d his friends had trick’d him,
And how he fell his party’s victim.

Know, says the God, by matchless skill
I change to ev'ry shape at will ;
But yet I'm told, at court you see
Those who presume to rival me.

Thus said, a snake with hideous trail,
Proteus extends his scaly mail.

Know, says the man, though proud in place,
All courtiers are of reptile race.
Like you, they take that dreadful form,
Bask in the sun, and fly the storm ;
With malice hiss, with envy gloat,
And for convenience change their coat ;
With new-got lustre rear their head,
Though on a dunghill born and bred.

Sudden the God a lion stands ;
He shakes his mane, he spurns the sands ;
Now a fierce lynx, with fiery glare,
A wolf, an ass, a fox, a bear.

Had I ne'er liv'd at court, he cries,
Such transformation might surprise ;
But there, in quest of daily game,
Each able courtier acts the same.

Wolves, lions, lynxes, while in place,
Their friends and fellows are their chase.
They play the bear's and fox's part ;
Now rob by force, now steal with art.
They sometimes in the senate bray ;
Or, chang'd again to beasts of prey,
Down from the lion to the ape,
Practise the frauds of ev'ry shape.

So said, upon the God he flies,
In cords the struggling captive ties.

Now, Proteus, now (to truth compell'd)
Speak, and confess thy art excell'd.
Use strength, surprise, or what you will,
The courtier finds evasion still :
Not to be bound by any ties,
And never forc'd to leave his lies.

FABLE XXXIV.

THE MASTIFFS.

THOSE who in quarrels interpose,
Must often wipe a bloody nose.
A Mastiff, of true English blood,
Lov'd fighting better than his food.
When dogs were snarling for a bone,
He long'd to make the war his own,
And often found (when two contend)
To interpose obtain'd his end ;
He glory'd in his limping pace ;
The scars of honour seam'd his face ;
In ev'ry limb a gash appears,
And frequent fights retrench'd his ears.

As, on a time, he heard from far
Two dogs engag'd in noisy war,
Away he scours and lays about him,
Resolv'd no fray should be without him.

Forth from his yard a tanner flies,
And to the bold intruder cries :

A cudgel shall correct your manners,
Whence sprung this cursed hate to tanners ?
While on my dog you vent your spite,
Sirrah ! 'tis me you dare not bite.

To see the battle thus perplex'd,
With equal rage a butcher vex'd,
Hoarse-screaming from the circled crowd,
To the curs'd Mastiff cries aloud :

Both Hockley-hole and Mary-bone
The combats of my Dog have known.
He ne'er, like bullies coward-hearted,
Attacks in public, to be parted.
Think not, rash fool, to share his fame :
Be his the honour or the shame.

Thus said, they swore, and rav'd like thunder ;
They dragg'd their fasten'd dogs asunder ;
While clubs and kicks from every side
Rebounded from the Mastiff's hide.

All reeking now with sweat and blood,
Awhile the parted warriors stood,
Then pour'd upon the meddling foe ;
Who, worried, howl'd and sprawl'd below.

He rose ; and limping from the fray,
By both sides mangled, sneak'd away.

FABLE XXXV.

THE BARLEY-MOW AND THE DUNGHILL.

HOW many saucy airs we meet
From Temple Bar to Aldgate Street !
Proud rogues, who shar'd the South Sea prey,
And sprung like mushrooms in a day !
They think it mean, to condescend
To know a brother or a friend ;
They blush to hear their mother's name,
And by their pride expose their shame.

As cross his yard, at early day,
A careful farmer took his way,
He stopp'd, and leaning on his fork,
Observ'd the flail's incessant work.
In thought he measur'd all his store,
His geese, his hogs, he number'd o'er ;

In fancy weigh'd the fleeces shorn,
And multiplied the next year's corn.

A Barley-mow, which stood beside,
Thus to its musing master cried :

Say, good Sir, is it fit or right
To treat me with neglect and slight ?
Me, who contribute to your cheer,
And raise your mirth with ale and beer ?
Why thus insulted, thus disgrac'd,
And that vile Dunghill near me plac'd ?
Are those poor sweepings of a groom,
That filthy sight, that nauseous fume,
Meet objects here ? Command it hence :
A thing so mean must give offence.

The humble Dunghill thus replied,
Thy master hears, and mocks thy pride :
Insult not thus the meek and low ;
In me thy benefactor know ;
My warm assistance gave thee birth,
Or thou hadst perish'd low in earth ;
But upstarts, to support their station,
Cancel at once all obligation.

FABLE XXXVI.

PYTHAGORAS AND THE COUNTRYMAN.

PYTHAG'RAS rose at early dawn
By soaring meditation drawn,
To breathe the fragrance of the day,
Through flow'ry fields he took his way.
In musing contemplation warm,
His steps misled him to a farm,
Where, on the ladder's topmost round,
A peasant stood ; the hammer's sound
Shook the weak barn. Say, friend, what care
Calls for thy honest labour there ?

The Clown with surly voice replies,
Vengeance aloud for justice cries.
This kite, by daily rapine fed,
My hens' annoy, my turkeys' dread,
At length his forfeit life has paid ;
See, on the wall, his wings display'd,
Here nail'd, a terror to his kind,
My fowls shall future safety find,

My yard the thriving poultry feed,
And my barn's refuse fat the breed.

Friend, says the Sage, the doom is wise ;
For public good the murd'rer dies.
But, if these tyrants of the air
Demand a sentence so severe,
Think how the glutton man devours ;
What bloody feasts regale his hours !
O impudence of power and might,
Thus to condemn a hawk or kite,
When thou, perhaps, carniv'rous sinner,
Hadst pullets yesterday for dinner !

Hold, cried the Clown, with passion heated,
Shall kites and men alike be treated ?
When heav'n the world with creatures
stor'd,

Man was ordain'd their sov'reign lord.

Thus tyrants boast, the Sage replied,
Whose murders spring from power and
pride.

Own then this manlike kite is slain
Thy greater lux'ry to sustain ;

For ¹ “petty rogues submit to fate,
That great ones may enjoy their state.”

FABLE XXXVII.

THE FARMER'S WIFE AND THE RAVEN.

WHY are those tears ? Why droops your
head ?

Is, then, your other husband dead ?

Or does a worse disgrace betide ?

Hath no one since his death applied ?

Alas ! you know the cause too well :

The salt is spilt, to me it fell.

Then, to contribute to my loss,

My knife and fork were laid across ;

On Friday, too ! the day I dread !

Would I were safe at home in bed !

Last night (I vow to heav'n 'tis true !)

Bounce from the fire a coffin flew.

¹ GARTH'S DISPENSARY

Next post some fatal news shall tell.
God send my Cornish friends be well !

Unhappy widow, cease thy tears,
Nor feel affliction in thy fears,
Let not thy stomach be suspended ;
Eat now, and weep when dinner's ended ;
And, when the butler clears the table,
For thy desert, I'll read my fable.

Betwixt her swagging panniers load
A farmer's wife to market rode,
And, jogging on, with thoughtful care
Summ'd up the profits of her ware ;
When, starting from her silver dream,
Thus far and wide was heard her scream :

That raven on yon left-hand oak
(Curse on his ill-betiding croak !)
Bodes me no good. No more she said,
When poor blind Ball, with stumbling tread,
Fell prone ; o'erturn'd the pannier lay,
And her mash'd eggs bestrow'd the way.

She, sprawling in the yellow road,
Rail'd, swore and curs'd. Thou croaking toad,

A murrain take thy whoreson throat !
I knew misfortune in the note.

Dame, quoth the Raven, spare your oaths,
Unclench your fist, and wipe your cloaths.
But why on me those curses thrown ?
Goody, the fault was all your own ;
For had you laid this brittle ware
On Dun, the old sure-footed mare,
Though all the Ravens of the hundred
With croaking had your tongue out-thunder'd,
Sure-footed Dun had kept his legs,
And you, good woman, sav'd your eggs.

FABLE XXXVIII.

THE TURKEY AND THE ANT.

IN other men we faults can spy,
And blame the mote that dims their eye ;
Each little speck and blemish find,
To our own stronger errors blind.

A Turkey, tir'd of common food,
Forsook the barn, and sought the wood ;
Behind her ran her infant train,
Collecting here and there a grain.

Draw near, my birds, the mother cries,
This hill delicious fare supplies ;
Behold, the busy Negro race ;
See, millions blacken all the place !
Fear not. Like me, with freedom eat ;
An Ant is most delightful meat.
How bless'd, how envied were our life,
Could we but 'scape the poult'rer's knife !
But man, curs'd man, on Turkeys preys,
And Christmas shortens all our days :
Sometimes with oysters we combine,
Sometimes assist the sav'ry chine.
From the low peasant to the lord,
The Turkey smokes on ev'ry board.
Sure men for gluttony are curs'd,
Of the seven deadly sins the worst.

An Ant, who climb'd beyond his reach,
Thus answer'd from the neighb'ring beech,

Ere you remark another's sin,
Bid thy own conscience look within.
Control thy more voracious bill,
Nor for a breakfast nations kill.

FABLE XXXIX.

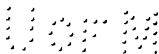
THE FATHER AND JUPITER.

THE man to Jove his suit preferr'd ;
He begg'd a wife. His prayer was heard.
JOVE wonder'd at his bold addressing :
For how precarious is the blessing !
A wife he takes. And now for heirs
Again he worries heav'n with pray'rs.
JOVE nods assent. Two hopeful boys
And a fine girl reward his joys.
Now, more solicitous he grew,
And set their future lives in view ;
He saw that all respect and duty
Were paid to wealth, to pow'r, and beauty.

Once more, he cries, accept my pray'r ;
Make my lov'd progeny thy care.
Let my first hope, my fav'rite boy,
All fortune's richest gifts enjoy.
My next with strong ambition fire :
May favour teach him to aspire ;
Till he the step of pow'r ascend,
And courtiers to their idol bend.
With ev'ry grace, with ev'ry charm,
My daughter's perfect features arm.
If Heav'n approve, a Father's bless'd.
Jove smiles, and grants his full request.

The first, a miser at the heart,
Studious of ev'ry griping art,
Heaps hoards on hoards with anxious pain ;
And all his life devotes to gain.
He feels no joy, his cares increase,
He neither wakes nor sleeps in peace ;
In fancied want (a wretch complete)
He starves, and yet he dares not eat.

The next to sudden honours grew :
The thriving art of courts he knew :



He reach'd the height of pow'r and place ;
Then fell, the victim of disgrace.

Beauty with early bloom supplies
His daughter's cheek, and points her eyes.
The vain coquette each suit disdains,
And glories in her lovers' pains.
With age she fades, each lover flies,
Contemn'd, forlorn, she pines and dies.

When Jove the Father's grief survey'd,
And heard him Heav'n and Fate upbraid,
Thus spoke the God. By outward show,
Men judge of happiness and woe :
Shall ignorance of good and ill
Dare to direct th' eternal will ?
Seek virtue ; and, of that possess,
To Providence resign the rest.

FABLE XL.

THE TWO MONKEYS.

THE learned, full of inward pride,
The Fops of outward show deride :
The Fop, with learning at defiance,
Scoffs at the pedant, and the science :
The Don, a formal, solemn strutter,
Despises Monsieur's airs and flutter ;
While Monsieur mocks the formal fool,
Who looks, and speaks, and walks by rule.
Britain, a medley of the twain,
As pert as France, as grave as Spain ;
In fancy wiser than the rest,
Laughs at them both, of both the jest,
Is not the poet's chiming close
Censur'd by all the sons of prose ?
While bards of quick imagination
Despise the sleepy prose narration.
Men laugh at apes, they men contemn ;
For what are we but Apes to them ?

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How would they wonder at our arts !
They must adore us for our parts.
High on the twig I've seen you cling ;
Play, twist and turn in airy ring :
How can those clumsy things, like me,
Fly with a bound from tree to tree ?
But yet, by this applause, we find
These emulators of our kind
Discern our worth, our parts regard,
Who our mean mimics thus reward. —

Brother, the grinning mate replies,
In this I grant that Man is wise.
While good example they pursue,
We must allow some praise is due ;
But when they strain beyond their guide,
I laugh to scorn the mimic pride.
For how fantastic is the sight,
To meet men always bolt upright,
Because we sometimes walk on two !
I hate the imitating crew.

FABLE XLI.

THE OWL AND THE FARMER.

AN Owl of grave deport and mien,
Who (like the Turk) was seldom seen,
Within a barn had chose his station,
As fit for prey and contemplation.
Upon a beam aloft he sits,
And nods, and seems to think, by fits.
So have I seen a man of news,
Or Post-boy, or Gazette, peruse ;
Smoke, nod, and talk with voice profound,
And fix the fate of Europe round.

Sheaves pil'd on sheaves hid all the floor.
At dawn of morn, to view his store
The Farmer came. The hooting guest
His self-importance thus exprest :

Reason in man is mere pretence :
How weak, how shallow is his sense !
To treat with scorn the Bird of night,
Declares his folly, or his spite.

Then too, how partial is his praise !
The lark's, the linnet's chirping lays
To his ill-judging ears are fine ;
And nightingales are all divine.
But the more knowing feather'd race
See wisdom stamp'd upon my face.
Whene'er to visit light I deign,
What flocks of fowl compose my train !
Like slaves they crowd my flight behind,
And own me of superior kind.

The Farmer laugh'd, and thus replied ;
Thou dull important lump of pride,
Dar'st thou with that harsh grating tongue,
Depreciate birds of warbling song ?
Indulge thy spleen. Know, men and fowl
Regard thee, as thou art, an Owl.
Besides, proud Blockhead, be not vain,
Of what thou call'st thy slaves and train.
Few follow wisdom or her rules ;
Fools in derision follow fools.

FABLE XLII.

THE JUGGLERS.

A JUGGLER long through all the town
Had rais'd his fortune and renown ;
You'd think (so far his art transcends)
The devil at his fingers' ends.

Vice heard his fame, she read his bill ;
Convinc'd of his inferior skill,
She sought his booth, and from the crowd
Defied the man of art aloud.

Is this, then, he so fam'd for sleight ?
Can this slow bungler cheat your sight !
Dares he with me dispute the prize ?
I leave it to impartial eyes.

Provok'd, the Juggler cried, 'Tis done.
In science I submit to none.

Thus said, the cups and balls he play'd ;
By turns, this here, that there, convey'd.
The cards, obedient to his words,
Are by a fillip turn'd to birds.

His little boxes change the grain :
Trick after trick deludes the train.
He shakes his bag, he shews all fair ;
His fingers spreads, and nothing there ;
Then bids it rain with showers of gold,
And now his iv'ry eggs are told.
But when from thence the hen he draws,
Amaz'd spectators hum applause.

Vice now stept forth, and took the place
With all the forms of his grimace.

This magic looking-glass, she cries,
(There, hand it round) will charm your eyes.
Each eager eye the sight desir'd,
And ev'ry man himself admir'd.

Next to a senator addressing ;
See this bank-note ; observe the blessing,
Breathe on the bill. Heigh, pass! 'Tis gone.
Upon his lips a padlock shone.
A second puff the magic broke,
The padlock vanish'd, and he spoke.

Twelve bottles rang'd upon the board,
All full, with heady liquor stor'd,

By clean conveyance disappear,
And now two bloody swords are there.

A purse she to a thief expos'd,
At once his ready fingers clos'd ;
He opes his fist, the treasure's fled ;
He sees a halter in its stead.

She bids ambition hold a wand ;
He grasps a hatchet in his hand.

A box of charity she shows :
Blow here ; and a church-warden blows.
'Tis vanish'd with conveyance neat,
And on the table smokes a treat.

She shakes the dice, the board she knocks
And from all pockets fills her box.

She next a meagre rake addrest.
This picture see ; her shape, her breast ;
What youth, and what inviting eyes !
Hold her, and have her. With surprise,
His hand expos'd a box of pills
And a loud laugh proclaim'd his ills.

A counter, in a miser's hand
Grew twenty guineas at command.

She bids his heir the sum retain,
And 'tis a counter now again.

A guinea with her touch you see
Take ev'ry shape, but Charity ;
And not one thing you saw, or drew,
But chang'd from what was first in view.

The Juggler now in grief of heart,
With this submission own'd her art.
Can I such matchless slight withstand !
How practice hath improv'd your hand !
But now and then I cheat the throng ;
You ev'ry day, and all day long.

FABLE XLIII.

THE COUNCIL OF HORSES.

UPON a time a neighing steed,
Who graz'd among a num'rous breed
With mutiny had fir'd the train,
And spread dissension through the plain.

On matters that concern'd the state
The council met in grand debate.
A colt, whose eye-balls flam'd with ire,
Elate with strength and youthful fire,
In haste stept forth before the rest,
And thus the list'ning throng address :

Good Gods ! how abject is our race,
Condemn'd to slav'ry and disgrace !
Shall we our servitude retain,
Because our sires have borne the chain ?
Consider, friends, your strength and might ;
'Tis conquest to assert your right.
How cumbrous is the gilded coach !
The pride of man is our reproach.
Were we design'd for daily toil,
To drag the plough-share through the soil,
To sweat in harness through the road,
To groan beneath the carrier's load ?
How feeble are the two legg'd kind !
What force is in our nerves combin'd !
Shall then our nobler jaws submit
To foam and champ the galling bit ?

Shall haughty man my back bestride ?
Shall the sharp spur provoke my side ?
Forbid it, heav'ns ! Reject the rein ;
Your shame, your infamy disdain.
Let him the Lion first control,
And still the Tiger's famish'd growl.
Let us, like them, our freedom claim,
And make him tremble at our name.

A general nod approv'd the cause,
And all the circle neigh'd applause.

When, lo ! with grave and solemn pace,
A Steed advanc'd before the race,
With age and long experience wise ;
Around he cast his thoughtful eyes,
And, to the murmurs of the train,
Thus spoke the Nestor of the plain :

When I had health and strength, like you,
The toils of servitude I knew ;
Now grateful man rewards my pains,
And gives me all these wide domains.
At will I crop the year's increase ;
My latter life is rest and peace.

I grant to man we lend our pains,
And aid him to correct the plains.
But doth not he divide the care,
Through all the labours of the year ?
How many thousand structures rise,
To fence us from inclement skies !
For us he bears the sultry day,
And stores up all our winter's hay.
He sows, he reaps the harvest's gain ;
We share the toil and share the grain.
Since ev'ry creature was decreed
To aid each other's mutual need,
Appease your discontented mind,
And act the part by heav'n assign'd.
The tumult ceas'd. The colt submitted,
And like his ancestors, was bitted.

FABLE XLIV.

THE HOUND AND THE HUNTSMAN.

IMPERTINENCE at first is borne
With heedless slight, or smiles of scorn ;
Teas'd into wrath, what patience bears
The noisy fool who perseveres ?

The morning wakes, the Huntsman sounds,
At once rush forth the joyful hounds.
They seek the wood with eager pace,
Through bush, through brier, explore the chase.
Now scatter'd wide, they try the plain,
And snuff the dewy turf in vain.
What care, what industry, what pains !
What universal silence reigns !

Ringwood, a Dog of little fame,
Young, pert, and ignorant of game,
At once displays his babbling throat ;
The pack, regardless of the note,
Pursue the scent ; with louder strain
He still persists to vex the train.

The Huntsman to the clamour flies ;
The smacking lash he smartly plies.
His ribs all welk'd, with howling tone
The puppy thus express'd his moan :

I know the music of my tongue
Long since the pack with envy stung.
What will not spite ? These bitter smarts
I owe to my superior parts.

When puppies prate, the Huntsman cried
They show both ignorance and pride :
Fools may our scorn, not envy, raise,
For envy is a kind of praise.
Had not thy forward noisy tongue
Proclaim'd thee always in the wrong,
Thou might'st have mingled with the rest
And ne'er thy foolish nose confest.
But fools, to talking ever prone,
Are sure to make their follies known.

FABLE XLV.

THE POET AND THE ROSE.

I HATE the man who builds his name
On ruins of another's fame.

Thus prudes, by characters o'erthrown,
Imagine that they raise their own.

Thus Scribblers, covetous of praise,
Think slander can transplant the bays.
Beauties and bards have equal pride,
With both all rivals are decried.

Who praises LESBIA'S eyes and feature,
Must call her sister awkward creature ;
For the kind flatt'ry's sure to charm,
When we some other nymph disarm.

As in the cool of early day
A Poet sought the sweets of May,
The garden's fragrant breath ascends,
And ev'ry stalk with odour bends.
A rose he pluck'd, he gaz'd, admir'd,
Thus singing as the Muse inspir'd :

Go, Rose, my CHLOE'S bosom grace ;
How happy should I prove,
Might I supply that envied place
With never-fading love !
There, Phoenix-like, beneath her eye,
Involv'd in fragrance, burn and die !
Know, hapless flow'r, that thou shalt find
More fragrant roses there ;
I see thy with'ring head reclin'd
With envy and despair !
One common fate we both must prove ;
You die with envy, I with love.
Spare your comparisons, replied
An angry Rose, who grew beside.
Of all mankind, you should not flout us ;
What can a Poet do without us !
In ev'ry love-song roses bloom ;
We lend you colour and perfume.
Does it to CHLOE'S charms conduce,
To found her praise on our abuse ?
Must we, to flatter her, be made
To wither, envy, pine and fade ?

FABLE XLVI.

*THE CUR, THE HORSE, AND THE
SHEPHERD'S DOG.*

THE lad of all-sufficient merit,
With modesty ne'er damps his spirit ;
Presuming on his own deserts,
On all alike his tongue exerts ;
His noisy jokes at random throws,
And pertly spatters friends and foes ;
In wit and war the bully race
Contribute to their own disgrace.
Too late the forward youth shall find
That jokes are sometimes paid in kind ;
Or if they canker in the breast,
He makes a foe who makes a jest.

A village-cur, of snappish race,
The pertest Puppy of the place,
Imagin'd that his treble throat
Was blest with music's sweetest note :
In the mid road he basking lay,
The yelping nuisance of the way ;

For not a creature pass'd along,
But had a sample of his song.

Soon as the trotting steed he hears,
He starts, he cocks his dapper ears ;
Away he scours, assaults his hoof ;
Now near him snarls, now barks aloof ;
With shrill impertinence attends ;
Nor leaves him till the village ends.

It chanc'd, upon his evil day,
A Pad came pacing down the way :
The Cur, with never-ceasing tongue,
Upon the passing trav'ler sprung.
The Horse, from scorn provok'd to ire,
Flung backward ; rolling in the mire,
The Puppy howl'd, and bleeding lay ;
The Pad in peace pursu'd his way.

A Shepherd's Dog, who saw the deed,
Detesting the vexatious breed,
Bespoke him thus. When coxcombs prate,
They kindle wrath, contempt, or hate ;
Thy teasing tongue had judgment tied,
Thou hadst not, like a Puppy, died.

FABLE XLVII.

THE COURT OF DEATH.

DEATH, on a solemn night of state,
In all his pomp of terror sate :
Th' attendants of his gloomy reign,
Diseases dire, a ghastly train !
Crowd the vast Court. With hollow tone,
A voice thus thunder'd from the throne.

This night our minister we name,
Let ev'ry servant speak his claim ;
Merit shall bear this ebon wand.
All, at the word, stretch'd forth their hand.

Fever, with burning heat possess,
Advanc'd, and for the wand address :

I to the weekly bills appeal,
Let those express my fervent zeal ;
On ev'ry slight occasion near,
With violence I persevere.

Next Gout appears with limping pace,
Pleads how he shifts from place to place,

From head to foot how swift he flies,
And ev'ry joint and sinew plies ;
Still working when he seems supprest,
A most tenacious stubborn guest.

A haggard Spectre from the crew
Crawls forth, and thus asserts his due :
'Tis I who taint the sweetest joy,
And in the shape of love destroy :
My shanks, sunk eyes, and noseless face
Prove my pretension to the place.

Stone urg'd his ever-growing force.
And, next, Consumption's meagre corse,
With feeble voice, that scarce was heard,
Broke with short coughs, his suit preferr'd :
Let none object my ling'ring way,
I gain, like *FABIUS*, by delay ;
Fatigue and weaken ev'ry foe
By long attack, secure, though slow.

Plague represents his rapid power,
Who thinn'd a nation in an hour.

All spoke their claim, and hop'd the wand
Now expectation hush'd the band,

When thus the Monarch from the throne :

Merit was ever modest known.

What, no Physician speak his right !

None here ? But fees their toils requite.

Let then Intemp'rance take the wand,

Who fills with gold their zealous hand.

You, Fever, Gout, and all the rest,

(Whom wary men as foes detest)

Forego your claim ; no more pretend :

Intemp'rance is esteem'd a friend ;

He shares their mirth, their social joys,

And, as a courted guest, destroys.

The charge on him must justly fall,

Who finds employment for you all.

FABLE XLVIII.

THE GARDENER AND THE HOG.

A GARD'NER, of peculiar taste,
On a young Hog his favour plac'd ;
Who fed not with the common herd ;
His tray was to the hall preferr'd.
He wallow'd underneath the board,
Or in his master's chamber snor'd ;
Who fondly strok'd him ev'ry day,
And taught him all the puppy's play.
Where'er he went, the grunting friend
Ne'er fail'd his pleasure to attend.

As on a time, the loving pair
Walk'd forth to tend the garden's care,
The Master thus address'd the Swine :

My house, my garden, all is thine.
On turnips feast whene'er you please,
And riot in my beans and peas ;
If the potato's taste delights,
Or the red carrot's sweet invites,

Indulge thy morn and evening hours,
But let due care regard my flow'rs :
My tulips are my garden's pride,
What vast expense those beds supplied !

The Hog by chance one morning roam'd,
Where with new ale the vessels foam'd.
He munches now the steaming grains,
Now with full swill the liquor drains.
Intoxicating fumes arise ;
He reels, he rolls his winking eyes ;
Then stagg'ring, through the garden scours,
And treads down painted ranks of flowers.
With delving snout he turns the soil,
And cools his palate with the spoil.

The Master came, the ruin spied,
Villain, suspend thy rage, he cried.
Hast thou, thou most ungrateful sot,
My charge, my only charge forgot ?
What, all my flow'rs ! No more he said,
But gaz'd, and sigh'd, and hung his head.

The Hog with stutt'ring speech returns :
Explain, Sir, why your anger burns.

See there, untouch'd your tulips strown,
For I devour'd the roots alone.

At this the Gard'ner's passion grows ;
From oaths and threats he fell to blows.
The stubborn brute the blow sustains ;
Assaults his leg, and tears the veins.

Ah ! foolish swain, too late you find
That sties were for such friends design'd !

Homeward he limps with painful pace,
Reflecting thus on past disgrace :
Who cherishes a brutal mate
Shall mourn the folly soon or late.

FABLE XLIX.

THE MAN AND THE FLEA.

W HETHER on earth, in air, or main,
Sure ev'ry thing alive is vain !

Does not the hawk all fowls survey,
As destin'd only for his prey ?

And do not tyrants, prouder things,
Think men were born for slaves to kings ?

When the crab views the pearly strands,
Or TAGUS, bright with golden sands ;
Or crawls beside the coral grove,
And hears the ocean roll above ;
Nature is too profuse, says he,
Who gave all these to pleasure me !

When bord'ring pinks and roses bloom,
And ev'ry garden breathes perfume ;
When peaches glow with sunny dyes,
Like LAURA'S cheek, when blushes rise ;
When with huge figs the branches bend,
When clusters from the vine depend ;
The snail looks round on flow'r and tree,
And cries, All these were made for me !

What dignity's in human nature !
Says Man, the most conceited creature,
As from a cliff he cast his eye,
And view'd the sea and arched sky.
The sun was sunk beneath the main ;
The moon and all the starry train,
1

Hung the vast vault of heav'n. The Man
His contemplation thus began :

When I behold this glorious show,
And the wide wat'ry world below,
The scaly people of the main,
The beasts that range the wood or plain,
The wing'd inhabitants of air,
The day, the night, the various year ;
And know all these by heav'n design'd
As gifts to pleasure human kind,
I cannot raise my worth too high ;
Of what vast consequence am I !

Not of th' importance you suppose,
Replies a Flea upon his nose.
Be humble, learn thyself to scan ;
Know, pride was never made for Man.
'Tis vanity that swells thy mind.
What, heav'n and earth for thee design'd !
For thee ! made only for our need,
That more important Fleas might feed.

FABLE L.

THE HARE AND MANY FRIENDS.

FRIENDSHIP, like love, is but a name,
Unless to one you stint the flame.
The child, whom many fathers share,
Hath seldom known a father's care.

'Tis thus in friendships ; who depend
On many, rarely find a friend.

A Hare, who in a civil way,
Complied with ev'ry thing, like GAY,
Was known by all the bestial train,
Who haunt the wood, or graze the plain.
Her care was, never to offend,
And ev'ry creature was her friend.

As forth she went at early dawn
To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,
Behind she hears the hunter's cries,
And from the deep-mouth'd thunder flies.
She starts, she stops, she pants for breath ;
She hears the near advance of death ;

She doubles to mislead the hound,
And measures back her mazy round ;
Till fainting in the public way,
Half-dead with fear, she gasping lay,
What transport in her bosom grew,
When first the Horse appear'd in view !

Let me, says she, your back ascend,
And owe my safety to a friend.
You know my feet betray my flight ;
To friendship every burden's light.

The Horse replied : Poor honest Puss,
It grieves my heart to see thee thus ;
Be comforted, relief is near ;
For all your friends are in the rear.

She next the stately Bull implor'd ;
And thus replied the mighty Lord :
Since ev'ry beast alive can tell
That I sincerely wish you well,
I may, without offence, pretend
To take the freedom of a friend.
Love calls me hence ; a fav'rite cow
Expects me near yon barley mow ;

And when a lady's in the case,
You know all other things give place.
To leave you thus might seem unkind ;
But see, the Goat is just behind.

The Goat remark'd her pulse was
high,
Her languid head, her heavy eye ;
My back, says he, may do you harm ;
The Sheep's at hand, and wool is
warm.

The Sheep was feeble, and complain'd
His sides a load of wool sustain'd :
Said he was slow, confess'd his fears ;
For hounds eat Sheep, as well as Hares !

She now the trotting Calf address'd,
To save from death a friend distress'd.

Shall I, says he, of tender age,
In this important care engage ?
Older and abler pass'd you by ;
How strong are those ! how weak am I !
Should I presume to bear you hence,
Those friends of mine may take offence.

Excuse me, then. You know my heart :
But dearest friends, alas ! must part.
How shall we all lament ! Adieu !
For see the hounds are just in view.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

PART THE SECOND

ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE FABLES were finished by Mr. GAY, and intended for the press, a short time before his death ; when they were left, with his other papers, to the care of his noble friend and patron, the DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY. His Grace has accordingly permitted them to the press ; and they are here printed from the originals in the author's own handwriting. We hope they will please equally with his former FABLES, though mostly on subjects of a graver and more political turn. They will certainly shew him to have been (what he esteemed the best character) a man of a truly honest heart, and a sincere lover of his country.

FABLE I.

THE DOG AND THE FOX.

TO A LAWYER.

I KNOW you Lawyers can with ease
Twist words and meanings as you please ;
That language, by your skill made pliant,
Will bend to favour ev'ry client ;
That 'tis the fee directs the sense
To make out either side's pretence.
When you peruse the clearest case,
You see it with a double face :
For scepticism's your profession ;
You hold there's doubt in all expression.

Hence is the bar with fees supplied ;
Hence eloquence takes either side.
Your hand would have but paltry gleaning
Could ev'ry man express his meaning.

Who dares presume to pen a deed,
Unless you previously are fee'd ?
'Tis drawn ; and, to augment the cost,
In dull prolixity engross'd.
And now we're well secur'd by law,
Till the next brother find a flaw.

Read o'er a Will. Was't ever known
But you could make the will your own ;
For when you read, 'tis with intent
To find out meanings never meant.
Since things are thus, *se defendendo*,
I bar fallacious innuendo.

Sagacious PORTA'S skill could trace
Some beast or bird in ev'ry face.
The head, the eye, the nose's shape,
Prov'd this an owl, and that an ape.
When, in the sketches thus design'd,
Resemblance brings some friend to mind,
You shew the piece, and give the hint,
And find each feature in the print :
So monstrous like the portrait's found,
All know it, and the laugh goes round.

Like him, I draw from gen'ral nature ;
Is't I or you then fix the satire ?

So, Sir, I beg you spare your pains
In making comments on my strains.
All private slander I detest,
I judge not of my neighbour's breast :
Party and prejudice I hate,
And write no libels on the state.

Shall not my fable censure vice,
Because a knave is over-nice ?
And, lest the guilty hear and dread,
Shall not the decalogue be read ?
If I lash vice in gen'ral fiction,
Is't I apply, or self-conviction ?
Brutes are my theme. Am I to blame,
If men in morals are the same ?
I no man call or ape or ass :
'Tis his own conscience holds the glass.
Thus void of all offence I write ;
Who claims the fable, knows his right.

A shepherd's dog unskill'd in sports,
Pick'd up acquaintance of all sorts :

Among the rest, a Fox he knew ;
By frequent chat their friendship grew.

Says Reynard—'Tis a cruel case,
That man should stigmatise our race.
No doubt, among us rogues you find,
As among Dogs, and human kind ;
And yet, (unknown to me and you)
There may be honest men and true.
Thus slander tries, whate'er it can,
To put us on the foot with man.
Let my own actions recommend ;
No prejudice can blind a friend :
You know me free from all disguise ;
My honour as my life I prize.

By talk like this, from all mistrust,
The Dog was cur'd, and thought him just.

As on a time the Fox held forth
On conscience, honesty, and worth,
Sudden he stopped ; he cock'd his ear ;
Low dropt his bushy tail with fear.

Bless us ! the hunters are abroad—
What's all that clatter on the road ?

Hold, says the Dog, we're safe from harm ;
'Twas nothing but a false alarm.
At yonder town, 'tis market day ;
Some farmer's wife is on the way.
'Tis so, (I know her pie-bald mare)
Dame Dobbins, with her poultry ware.

Reynard grew huff. Says he, this sneer
From you I little thought to hear.
Your meaning in your looks I see.
Pray, what's Dame Dobbins, friend, to me ?
Did I e'er make her poultry thinner ?
Prove that I owe th' Dame a dinner.

Friend, quoth the Cur, I meant no harm :
Then, why so captious ? why so warm ?
My words, in common acceptation,
Could never give this provocation.
No lamb (for ought I ever knew)
May be more innocent than you.

At this, gall'd Reynard winc'd and swore
Such language ne'er was giv'n before.

What's lamb to me ! This saucy hint
Shews me, base knave, which way you squint.

If t'other night your master lost
Three lambs, am I to pay the cost ?
Your vile reflections would imply
That I'm the thief. You Dog, you lie.

Thou knave, thou fool (the Dog replied)
The name is just, take either side ;
Thy guilt these applications speak ;
Sirrah, 'tis conscience makes you squeak !

So saying, on the Fox he flies.
The self-convicted felon dies.

FABLE II.

*THE VULTURE, THE SPARROW, AND OTHER
BIRDS.*

TO A FRIEND IN THE COUNTRY

ERE I begin, I must premise
Our ministers are good and wise ;
So, though malicious tongues apply,
Pray, what care they, or what care I ?

If I am free with courts ; be't known,
I ne'er presume to mean our own.
If general morals seem to joke
On ministers, and such like folk,
A captious fool may take offence ;
What then ? he knows his own pretence.
I meddle with no state affairs,
But spare my jest to save my ears.
Our present schemes are too profound,
For MACHIAVEL himself to sound :
To censure 'em I have no pretension ;
I own they're past my comprehension.

You say your brother wants a place,
('Tis many a younger brother's case)
And that he very soon intends
To ply the court, and tease his friends.
If there his merits chance to find
A patriot of an open mind,
Whose constant actions prove him just
To both a King's and people's trust,
May he with gratitude attend,
And owe his rise to such a friend.

You praise his parts, for business fit,
His learning, probity, and wit ;
But those alone will never do,
Unless his patron have 'em too. .

I've heard of times (pray God defend us,
We're not so good but he can mend us)
When wicked ministers have trod
On kings and people, law and God ;
With arrogance they girt the throne,
And knew no int'rest but their own.
Then virtue, from preferment barr'd,
Gets nothing but its own reward.
A gang of petty knaves attend 'em,
With proper parts to recommend 'em.
Then if their patron burn with lust,
The first in favour's pimp the first.
His doors are never clos'd to spies,
Who cheer his heart with double lies ;
They flatter him, his foes defame,
So lull the pangs of guilt and shame.
If schemes of lucre haunt his brain,
Projectors swell his greedy train ;

Vile brokers ply his private ear
With jobs of plunder for the year ;
All consciences must bend and ply ;
You must vote on, and not know why :
Through thick and thin you must go on ;
One scruple, and your place is gone.

Since plagues like these have curst a
land,
And fav'rites cannot always stand ;
Good courtiers should for change be
ready,
And not have principles too steady :
For should a knave engross the pow'r,
(God shield the realm from that sad hour)
He must have rogues, or slavish fools :
For what's a knave without his tools ?

Wherever those a people drain,
And strut with infamy and gain ;
I envy not their guilt and state,
And scorn to share the public hate.
Let their own servile creatures rise
By screening fraud, and venting lies ;

Give me, kind heav'n, a private station,*
A mind serene for contemplation :
Title and profit I resign ;
The post of honour shall be mine.
My fable read, their merits view,
Then herd who will with such a crew.

In days of yore (my cautious rhymes
Always except the present times)
A greedy Vulture, skill'd in game,
Inur'd to guilt, unaw'd by shame,
Approach'd the throne in evil hour,
And, step by step, intrudes to pow'r ;
When at the royal eagle's ear,
He longs to ease the monarch's care.
The monarch grants. With pride elate,
Behold him minister of state !
Around him throng the feather'd rout ;
Friends must be serv'd, and some must out
Each thinks his own the best pretension ;
This asks a place, and that a pension.

* ——— When impious men bear sway,
The Post of Honour is a private station.—ADDISON.

The nightingale was set aside :
A forward daw his room supplied.
This bird (says he) for bus'ness fit,
Hath both sagacity and wit.
With all his turns, and shifts, and tricks,
He's docile, and at nothing sticks.
Then with his neighbours, one so free
At all times will connive at me.

The hawk had due distinction shown,
For parts and talents like his own.

Thousands of hireling cocks attend him,
As blust'ring bullies, to defend him.

At once the ravens were discarded,
And magpies with their posts rewarded.

Those fowls of omen I detest,
That pry into another's nest :
State lies must lose all good intent ;
For they foresee and croak th' event.
My friends ne'er think, but talk by rote,
Speak what they're taught, and so to vote.

When rogues like these (a sparrow cries)
To honours and employments rise,

I court no favour, ask no place ;
From such, preferment is disgrace.
Within my thatch'd retreat I find
(What these ne'er feel) true peace of mind.

FABLE III.

THE BABOON AND THE POULTRY.

TO A LEVÉE HUNTER.

WE frequently misplace esteem,
By judging men by what they seem.
To birth, wealth, pow'r, we should allow
Precedence, and our lowest bow.
In that is due distinction shown,
Esteem is virtue's right alone.
With partial eye we're apt to see
The man of noble pedigree.
We're prepossess'd my lord inherits
In some degree his grandsire's merits ;
For those we find upon record :
But find him nothing but my lord.

When we with superficial view,
Gaze on the rich, we're dazzled too.
We know that wealth well understood,
Hath frequent pow'r of doing good :
Then fancy that the thing is done,
As if the pow'r and will were one.
Thus oft the cheated crowd adore
The thriving knaves that keep 'em poor.

The cringing train of pow'r survey :
What creatures are so low as they !
With what obsequiousness they bend !
To what vile actions condescend !
Their rise is on their meanness built,
And flatt'ry is their smallest guilt.
What homage, rev'rence, adoration,
In ev'ry age, in ev'ry nation,
Have sycophants to pow'r address'd !
No matter who the pow'r possess'd.
Let ministers be what they will,
You find their levees always fill.
Even those who have perplex'd a state,
Whose actions claim contempt and hate,

Had wretches to applaud their schemes,
Though more absurd than madmen's dreams.
When barb'rous MOLOCH was invok'd,
The blood of infants only smok'd ;
But here (unless all hist'ry lies)
Whole realms have been a sacrifice.

Look through all courts—'Tis pow'r we find,
The gen'ral idol of mankind ;
There worshipp'd under ev'ry shape ;
Alike the lion, fox, and ape,
Are follow'd by time-serving slaves,
Rich prostitutes, and needy knaves.

Who, then, shall glory in his post ?
How frail his pride, how vain his boast !
The followers of his prosp'rous hour
Are as unstable as his pow'r.
Pow'r by the breath of flatt'ry nurs'd,
The more it swells, is nearer burst.
The bubble breaks, the gewgaw ends,
And in a dirty tear descends.

Once on a time, an ancient maid,
By wishes and by time decay'd,

To cure the pangs of restless thought,
In birds and beasts amusement sought :
Dogs, parrots, apes, her hours employ'd ;
With these alone she talk'd and toy'd.

A huge Baboon her fancy took,
(Almost a man in size and look),
He finger'd ev'ry thing he found,
And mimic'd all the servants round.
Then, too, his parts and ready wit
Shew'd him for ev'ry business fit.
With all these talents, 'twas but just
That Pug should hold a place of trust :
So to her fav'rite was assign'd
The charge of all her feather'd kind.
'Twas his to tend 'em eve and morn,
And portion out their daily corn.

Behold him now with haughty stride,
Assume a ministerial pride !
The morning rose. In hope of picking,
Swans, turkeys, peacocks, ducks, and chicken,
Fowls of all ranks surround his hut,
To worship his important strut.

The minister appears. The crowd
Now here, now there, obsequious bow'd.
This prais'd his parts, and that his face,
T'other his dignity in place.

From bill to bill the flatt'ry ran :
He hears and bears it like a man :
For, when we flatter self-conceit,
We but his sentiments repeat.

If we're too scrupulously just,
What profit's in a place of trust ?
The common practice of the great,
Is, to secure a snug retreat.
So Pug began to turn his brain
(Like other folks in place) on gain.

An apple-woman's stall was near,
Well stock'd with fruits through all the year ;
Here ev'ry day he cramm'd his guts,
Hence were his hoards of pears and nuts ;
For 'twas agreed (in way of trade)
His payments should in corn be made.

The stock of grain was quickly spent,
And no account which way it went.

Then, too, the poultry's starv'd condition
Caus'd speculations of suspicion.

The facts were prov'd beyond dispute ;

Pug must refund his hoards of fruit :

And, though then minister in chief,

Was branded as a public thief.

Disgrac'd, despis'd, confin'd to chains,

He nothing but his pride retains.

A goose pass'd by ; he knew the face,

Seen ev'ry levee while in place.

What, no respect ! no rev'rence shown !

How saucy are these creatures grown !

Not two days since (says he) you bow'd

The lowest of my fawning crowd.

Proud fool (replies the goose), 'tis true,

Thy corn a flutt'ring levee drew !

For that I join'd the hungry train,

And sold thee flatt'ry for thy grain ;

But then, as now, conceited ape,

We saw thee in thy proper shape.

FABLE IV.

THE ANT IN OFFICE.

TO A FRIEND.

YOU tell me, that you apprehend
My verse may touchy folks offend.
In prudence, too, you think my rhymes
Should never squint at courtiers' crimes :
For though nor this, nor that is meant,
Can we another's thoughts prevent ?

You ask me if I ever knew
Court chaplains thus the lawn pursue.
I meddle not with gown or lawn ;
Poets, I grant, to rise must fawn.
They know great ears are over-nice,
And never shock their patron's vice.
But I this hackney path despise ;
'Tis my ambition not to rise.
If I must prostitute the muse,
The base conditions I refuse.

I neither flatter nor defame,
Yet own I would bring guilt to shame.

If I corruption's hand expose,
I make corrupted men my foes.
What then ? I hate the paltry tribe.
Be virtue mine ; be theirs the bribe.
I no man's property invade ;
Corruption's yet no lawful trade.
Nor would it mighty ills produce,
Could I shame brib'ry out of use,
I know 'twould cramp most politicians,
Were they ty'd down to these conditions.
'Twould stint their pow'r, their riches bound,
And make their parts seem less profound.
Were they denied their proper tools,
How could they lead their knaves and fools ?
Were this the case, let's take a view,
What dreadful mischiefs would ensue ;
Though it might aggrandize the state,
Could private luxury dine on plate ?
Kings might indeed their friends reward,
But ministers find less regard.
Informers, sycophants, and spies,
Would not augment the year's supplies.

Perhaps too, take away this prop,
An annual job or two might drop.
Besides, if pensions were denied,
Could avarice support its pride?
It might e'en ministers confound,
And yet the state be safe and sound.

I care not though 'tis understood,
I only mean my country's good :
And (let who will my freedom blame)
I wish all courtiers did the same.
Nay, though some folks the less might get,
I wish the nation out of debt.
I put no private man's ambition
With public good in competition :
Rather than have our laws defac'd,
I'd vote a minister disgrac'd.

I strike at vice, be't where it will ;
And what if great folks take it ill ?
I hope corruption, brib'ry, pension,
One may with detestation mention :
Think you the law (let who will take it)
Can *scandalum magnatum* make it ?

I vent no slander, owe no grudge,
Nor of another's conscience judge :
At him or him I take no aim,
Yet dare against all vice declaim.
Shall I not censure breach of trust,
Because knaves know themselves unjust ?
That steward, whose account is clear,
Demands his honour may appear :
His actions never shun the light ;
He is, and would be prov'd upright.

But then you think my Fable bears
Allusion, too, to state affairs.

I grant it does. And who's so great,
That has the privilege to cheat ?
If, then, in any future reign
(For ministers may thirst for gain),
Corrupted hands defraud the nation,
I bar no reader's application.

An Ant there was, whose forward prate
Control'd all matters in debate ;
Whether he knew the thing or no,
His tongue eternally would go.

For he had impudence at will,
And boasted universal skill.
Ambition was his point in view ;
Thus, by degrees, to pow'r he grew.
Behold him now his drift attain :
He's made chief treas'rer of the grain.

But as their ancient laws are just,
And punish breach of public trust,
'Tis ordered (lest wrong application
Should starve that wise, industrious nation)
That all accounts be stated clear,
Their stock, and what defray'd the year :
That auditors should these inspect,
And public rapine thus be check'd.
For this the solemn day was set,
The auditors in council met.
The gran'ry keeper must explain,
And balance his account of grain.
He brought (since he could not refuse 'em)
Some scraps of paper to amuse 'em.

An honest pismire, warm with zeal,
In justice to the public weal,

Thus spoke. The nation's hoard is low,
From whence doth this profusion flow ?
I know our annual fund's amount.
Why such expence, and where's th' account ?

With wonted arrogance and pride,
The Ant in office thus replied :

Consider, Sirs, were secrets told,
How could the best-schem'd projects hold ?
Should we state-mysteries disclose,
'Twould lay us open to our foes.
My duty and my well-known zeal
Bid me our present schemes conceal.
But, on my honour, all th' expence
(Though vast) was for the swarm's defence.

They pass'd th' account as fair and just,
And voted him implicit trust.

Next year again the gran'ry drain'd,
He thus his innocence maintain'd.

Think how our present matters stand,
What dangers threat from ev'ry hand ;
What hosts of turkeys stroll for food,
No farmer's wife but hath her brood.

Consider, when invasion's near,
Intelligence must cost us dear ;
And, in this ticklish situation,
A secret told betrays the nation.
But, on my honour, all th' expence
(Though vast) was for the swarm's defence.

Again, without examination,
They thank'd his sage administration.
The year revolves. Their treasure spent,
Again in secret service went.
His honour too again was pledg'd,
To satisfy the charge alleg'd.

When thus, with panic shame possess'd,
An auditor his friends address'd :

What are we ? Ministerial tools !
We little knaves are greater fools.
At last this secret is explor'd ;
'Tis our corruption thins the hoard.
For ev'ry grain we touch'd, at least
A thousand his own heaps increas'd.
Then, for his kin, and fav'rite spies,
A hundred hardly could suffice.

Thus, for a paltry, sneaking bribe,
We cheat ourselves, and all the tribe ;
For all the magazine contains,
Grows from our annual toil and pains.

They vote th' account shall be inspected ;
The cunning plund'rer is detected :
The fraud is sentenc'd ; and his hoard,
As due, to public use restor'd.

FABLE V.

THE BEAR IN A BOAT.

TO A COXCOMB.

THAT man must daily wiser grow,
Whose search is bent himself to know ;
Impartially he weighs his scope,
And on firm reason founds his hope ;
He tries his strength before the race,
And never seeks his own disgrace ;
He knows the compass, sail, and oar,
Or never launches from the shore ;

Before he builds, computes the cost ;
And in no proud pursuit is lost :
He learns the bounds of human sense,
And safely walks within the fence.
Thus, conscious of his own defect,
Are pride and self-importance check'd.

If then, self-knowledge to pursue,
Direct our life in ev'ry view,
Of all the fools that pride can boast,
A Coxcomb claims distinction most.

Coxcombs are of all ranks and kind ;
They're not to sex or age confin'd,
Or rich, or poor, or great, or small ;
And vanity besots 'em all.

By ignorance is pride increas'd :
Those most assume who know the least ;
Their own false balance gives 'em weight
But ev'ry other finds 'em light.

Not that all Coxcomb's follies strike,
And draw our ridicule alike ;
To diff'rent merits each pretends.
This in love-vanity transcends ;

That smitten with his face and shape,
By dress distinguishes the ape ;
T'other with learning crams his shelf,
Knows books, and all things but himself.

All these are fools of low condition,
Compar'd with Coxcombs of ambition.
For those, puff'd up with flatt'ry, dare
Assume a nation's various care.
They ne'er the grossest praise mistrust,
Their sycophants seem hardly just ;
For these, in part alone, attest
The flatt'ry their own thoughts suggest.
In this wide sphere a coxcomb's shown
In other realms beside his own :
The self-deem'd MACHIAVEL at large
By turns controls in ev'ry charge.
Does commerce suffer in her rights ?
'Tis he directs the naval flights.
What sailor dares dispute his skill ?
He'll be an adm'ral when he will.
Now meddling in the soldier's trade,
Troops must be hir'd, and levies made.

He gives ambassadors their cue,
His cobbled treaties to renew ;
And annual taxes must suffice
The current blunders to disguise.
When his crude schemes in air are lost,
And millions scarce defray the cost,
His arrogance (nought undismay'd)
Trusting in self-sufficient aid,
On other rocks misguides the realm,
And thinks a pilot at the helm.
He ne'er suspects his want of skill,
But blunders on from ill to ill ;
And, when he fails of all intent,
Blames only unforeseen event.
Lest you mistake the application,
The fable calls me to relation.

A Bear of shag and manners rough,
At climbing trees expert enough,
For dex'trously, and safe from harm,
Year after year he robb'd the swarm :
Thus, thriving on industrious toil,
He gloried in his pilfer'd spoil.

This trick so swell'd him with conceit,
He thought no enterprise too great.
Alike in sciences and arts,
He boasted universal parts ;
Pragmatic, busy, bustling, bold,
His arrogance was uncontroll'd :
And thus he made his party good,
And grew dictator of the wood.

The beasts with admiration stare,
And think him a prodigious Bear.
Were any common booty got,
'Twas his each portion to allot :
For why ? he found there might be picking,
Ev'n in the carving of a chicken !
Intruding thus, he by degrees
Claim'd too the butcher's larger fees.
And now his over-weaning pride
In ev'ry province will preside.
No task too difficult was found :
His blund'ring nose misleads the hound.
In stratagem and subtle arts,
He over-rules the fox's parts.

It chanc'd, as, on a **certain day**,
Along the bank he took **his way**,
A boat, with rudder, **sail, and oar**,
At anchor floated near **the shore**.
He stopt, and turning to **his train**,
Thus pertly vents his **vaunting strain** :

What blund'ring puppies are **mankind**,
In ev'ry science always **blind** !
I mock the pedantry of **schools**.
What are their compasses and **rules** ?
From me that helm shall **conduct learn**,
And man his ignorance **discern**.

So saying, with **audacious pride**,
He gains the boat, and **climbs the side**.
The beasts astonish'd, **lin'd the strand**,
The anchor's weigh'd, he **drives from land** :
The slack sail shifts from **side to side** ;
The boat untrimm'd admits **the tide**.
Borne down, adrift, at **random toss'd**,
His oar breaks short, the **rudder's lost**.
The Bear, presuming in **his skill**,
Is here . . . there officious **still** ;

Till striking on the dang'rous sands,
A-ground the shatter'd vessel stands.

To see the bungler thus distress'd,
The very fishes sneer and jest.
Ev'n gudgeons join in ridicule,
To mortify the meddling fool.
The clam'rous watermen appear ;
Threats, curses, oaths, insult his ear :
Seiz'd, thrash'd, and chain'd, he's dragg'd to
land ;
Derision shouts along the strand.

FABLE VI.

THE SQUIRE AND HIS CUR.

TO A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

THE man of pure and simple heart
Through life disdains a double part.
He never needs the screen of lies
His inward bosom to disguise.

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Along the bank he took his way,
A boat, with rudder, sail, and oar,
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He never needs the screen of lies
His inward bosom to disguise.

In vain malicious tongues assail ;
Let envy snarl, let slander rail,
From virtue's shield (secure from wound)
Their blunted, venom'd shafts rebound.
So shines his light before mankind,
His actions prove his honest mind.
If in his country's cause he rise,
Debating senates to advise,
Unbrib'd, unaw'd, he dares impart
The honest dictates of his heart.
No ministerial frown he fears,
But in his virtue perseveres.

But would you play the politician,
Whose heart's averse to intuition,
Your lips at all times, nay, your reason
Must be controll'd by place and season.
What statesman could his pow'r support,
Were lying tongues forbid the court ?
Did princely ears to truth attend,
What minister could gain his end ?
How could he raise his tools to place,
And how his honest foes disgrace ?

That politician tops his part,
Who readily can lie with art :
The man's proficient in his trade ;
His pow'r is strong, his fortune's made.
By that the int'rest of the throne
Is made subservient to his own :
By that have kings of old, deluded,
All their own friends for his excluded.
By that, his selfish schemes pursuing,
He thrives upon the public ruin.

ANTIOCHUS,¹ with hardy pace,
Provok'd the dangers of the chace ;
And, lost, from all his menial train,
Travers'd the wood and pathless plain.
A cottage lodg'd the royal guest !
The PARTHIAN clown brought forth his
best.

The king, unknown, his feast enjoy'd,
And various chat the hours employ'd.
From wine what sudden friendship springs !
Frankly they talk'd of courts and kings.

¹ PLUTARCH.

We country-folks (the clown replies)
Could ope our gracious monarch's eyes.
The king, (as all our neighbours say)
Might he (God bless him !) have his way,
Is sound at heart, and means our good,
And he would do it, if he could.
If truth in courts were not forbid,
Nor kings nor subjects would be rid.
Were he in pow'r, we need not doubt him :
But that transferr'd to those about him,
On them he throws the regal cares :
And what mind they ? Their own affairs.
If such rapacious hands he trust,
The best of men may seem unjust.
From kings to cobblers 'tis the same :
Bad servants wound their master's fame.
In this our neighbours all agree :
Would the king knew as much as we.
Here he stopped short. Repose they sought :
The peasant slept, the monarch thought.
The courtiers learn'd, at early dawn,
Where their lost sov'reign was withdrawn.

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Who readily can lie with art :
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The king, unknown, his feast enjoy'd,
And various chat the hours employ'd.
From wine what friendship springs !
Frankly they tell of courts and kings.

Thus wicked ministers oppress,
When oft the monarch means redress.

Would kings their private subjects hear,
A minister must talk with fear.
If honesty oppos'd his views,
He dar'd not innocence accuse.
'Twould keep him in such narrow bound,
He could not right and wrong confound.
Happy were kings, could they disclose
Their real friends and real foes !
Were both themselves and subjects known;
A monarch's will might be his own.
Had he the use of ears and eyes,
Knaves would no more be counted wise.
But then a minister might lose
(Hard case !) his own ambitious views.
When such as these have vex'd a state,
Pursu'd by universal hate,
Their false support at once hath fail'd,
And persevering truth prevail'd.
Expos'd their train of fraud is seen ;
Truth will at last remove the screen.

A country 'Squire, by whim directed,
The true staunch dogs of chace neglected.
Beneath his board no hound was fed,
His hand ne'er strok'd the spaniel's head.
A snappish Cur, alone caress'd,
By lies had banish'd all the rest.
YAP had his ear ; and defamation
Gave him full scope of conversation.
His sycophants must be preferred,
Room must be made for all his herd :
Wherefore, to bring his schemes about,
Old faithful servants all must out.

The Cur on ev'ry creature flew
(As other great men's puppies do),
Unless due court to him were shown,
And both their face and bus'ness known.
No honest tongue an audience found :
He worried all the tenants round ;
For why ? he liv'd in constant fear,
Lest truth, by chance, should interfere.
If any stranger dar'd intrude,
The noisy Cur his heels pursu'd.

Now fierce with rage, now struck with
dread,

At once he snarled, [he] bit, and fled.
Aloof he bays, with bristling hair,
And thus in secret growls his fear :
Who knows but truth, in this disguise,
May frustrate my best-guarded lies ?
Should she (thus mask'd) admittance find,
That very hour my ruin's sign'd.

Now, in his howl's continued sound,
Their words were lost, their voice was
drown'd.

Ever in awe of honest tongues,
Thus ev'ry day he strain'd his lungs.

It happen'd, in ill-omen'd hour,
That YAP, unmindful of his pow'r,
Forsook his post, to love inclin'd ;
A fav'rite bitch was in the wind.
By her seduc'd, in am'rous play,
They frisk'd the joyous hours away.
Thus, by untimely love pursuing,
Like ANTONY, he sought his ruin.

For now the 'Squire, unvex'd with
noise,

An honest neighbour's chat enjoys.
Be free (says he), your mind impart ;
I love a friendly, open heart.
Methinks my tenants shun my gate ;
Why such a stranger grown of late ;
Pray tell me what offence they find :
'Tis plain they're not so well inclin'd.

Turn off your Cur (the farmer cries),
Who feeds your ear with daily lies.
His snarling insolence offends ;
'Tis he that keeps you from your friends.
Were but that saucy puppy check'd,
You'd find again the same respect.
Hear only him, he'll swear it too,
That all our hatred is to you.
But learn from us your true estate ;
'Tis that curs'd Cur alone we hate.

The 'Squire heard truth. Now YAP
rush'd in ;
The wide hall echoes with his din :

Yet truth prevail'd ; and with disgrace,
The Dog was cudgell'd out of place.

FABLE VII.

THE COUNTRYMAN AND JUPITER.

TO MYSELF.

HAVE you a friend (look round and spy)
So fond, so prepossess'd as I ?
Your faults, so obvious to mankind,
My partial eyes could never find.
When by the breath of fortune blown,
Your airy castles were o'erthrown ;
Have I been over-prone to blame,
Or mortified your hours with shame ?
Was I e'er known to damp your spirit,
Or twit you with the want of merit ?
'Tis not so strange, that fortune's frown
Still perseveres to keep you down.
Look round, and see what others do.
Would you be rich and honest too ?

Have you (like those she rais'd to place)
Been opportunely mean and base ?
Have you (as times requir'd) resign'd
Truth, honour, virtue, peace of mind ?
If these are scruples, give her o'er ;
Write, practise morals, and be poor.

The gifts of fortune truly rate ;
Then tell me what would mend your state.
If happiness on wealth were built,
Rich rogues might comfort find in guilt ;
As grows the miser's hoarded store,
His fears, his wants, increase the more.

Think, GAY (what ne'er may be the case),
Should fortune take you into grace,
Would that your happiness augment ?
What can she give beyond content ?

Suppose yourself a wealthy heir,
With a vast annual income clear !
In all the affluence you possess,
You might not feel one care the less.
Might you not then (like others) find
With change of fortune, change of mind ?

Perhaps, profuse beyond all rule,
You might start out a glaring fool ;
Your luxury might break all bounds :
Plate, table, horses, stewards, hounds,
Might swell your debts : then, lust of play
No regal income can defray.
Sunk is all credit, writs assail,
And doom your future life to jail.

Or were you dignified with pow'r,
Would that avert one pensive hour ?
You might give avarice its swing,
Defraud a nation, blind a king :
Then, from the hirelings in your cause,
Though daily fed with false applause,
Could it a real joy impart ?
Great guilt knew never joy at heart.

Is happiness your point in view ?
(I mean the intrinsic and the true)
She nor in camps or courts resides,
Nor in the humble cottage hides ;
Yet found alike in ev'ry sphere,
Who finds content, will find her there.

O'erspent with toil, beneath the shade,
A peasant rested on his spade.
Good gods ! he cries, 'tis hard to bear
This load of life from year to year.
Soon as the morning streaks the skies,
Industrious labour bids me rise ;
With sweat I earn my homely fare,
And ev'ry day renews my care.

JOVE heard the discontented strain,
And thus rebuk'd the murm'ring swain :

Speak out your wants then, honest friend :
Unjust complaints the gods offend.
If you repine at partial fate,
Instruct me what could mend your state.
Mankind in ev'ry station see.
What wish you ? Tell me what you'd be.

So said, upborne upon a cloud,
The clown survey'd the anxious crowd.

Yon face of care, says JOVE, behold ;
His bulky bags are fill'd with gold.
See with what joy he counts it o'er !
That sum to-day hath swell'd his store

Were I that man (the Peasant cried),
What blessing could I ask beside ?

Hold, says the god ; first learn to know
True happiness from outward show.
This optic glass of intuition—
Here, take it, view his true condition.

He look'd, and saw the miser's breast,
A troubled ocean, ne'er at rest ;
Want ever stares him in the face,
And fear anticipates disgrace :
With conscious guilt he saw him start ;
Extortion gnaws his throbbing heart ;
And never, or in thought or dream,
His breast admits one happy gleam.

May Jove, he cries, reject my pray'r,
And guard my life from guilt and care.
My soul abhors that wretch's fate.
O keep me in my humble state !
But see, amidst a gaudy crowd,
Yon minister, so gay and proud,
On him what happiness attends,
Who thus rewards his grateful friends !

First take the glass, the God replies :
Man views the world with partial eyes.

Good gods ! exclaims the startled wight,
Defend me from this hideous sight !
Corruption, with corrosive smart,
Lies cank'ring on his guilty heart :
I see him, with polluted hand,
Spread the contagion o'er the land.
Now av'rice with insatiate jaws,
Now rapine with her harpy claws,
His bosom tears. His conscious breast
Groans, with a load of crimes oppress'd.
See him, mad and drunk with power,
Stand tott'ring on ambition's tower.
Sometimes, in speeches vain and proud,
His boasts insult the nether crowd ;
Now, seiz'd with giddiness and fear,
He trembles lest his fall is near.

Was ever wretch like this ! he cries,
Such misery in such disguise !
The change, O JOVE, I disavow ;
Still be my lot the spade and plough.

He next confirm'd by speculation,
Rejects the lawyer's occupation ;
For he the statesman seem'd in part,
And bore similitude of heart.
Nor did the soldier's trade inflame
His hopes with thirst of spoil and fame :
The mis'ries of war he mourn'd ;
Whole nations into deserts turn'd.
By these have laws and rights been brav'd ;
By these was free-born man enslav'd :
When battles and invasion cease,
Why swarm they in the lands of peace ?
Such change (says he) may I decline ;
The scythe and civil arms be mine !

Thus, weighing life in each condition,
The Clown withdrew his rash petition.

When thus the god : How mortals err !
If you true happiness prefer,
'Tis to no rank of life confin'd,
But dwells in ev'ry honest mind.
Be justice then your sole pursuit :
Plant virtue, and content's the fruit.

So Jove, to gratify the Clown,
Where first he found him set him down.

FABLE VIII.

THE MAN, THE CAT, THE DOG, AND THE FLY

TO MY NATIVE COUNTRY.

HAIL, happy land, whose fertile grounds
The liquid fence of NEPTUNE bounds ;
By bounteous Nature set apart,
The seat of industry and art !
O BRITAIN ! chosen port of trade,
May luxury ne'er thy sons invade ;
May never minister (intent
His private treasures to augment)
Corrupt thy state. If jealous foes
Thy rights of commerce dare oppose,
Shall not thy fleets their rapine awe ?
Who is't prescribes the ocean law ?
Whenever neighb'ring states contend,
'Tis thine to be the gen'ral friend.

: What is't who rules in other lands ?
On trade alone thy glory stands.
That benefit is unconfi'd,
Diffusing good among mankind :
That first gave lustre to thy reigns,
And scatter'd plenty o'er thy plains :
'Tis that alone thy wealth supplies,
And draws all EUROPE'S envious eyes.
Be commerce then thy sole design ;
Keep that, and all the world is thine.

When naval traffic ploughs the main,
Who shares not in the merchant's gain ?
'Tis that supports the regal state,
And makes the farmer's heart elate :
The num'rous flocks, that clothe the land,
Can scarce supply the loom's demand ;
Prolific culture glads the fields,
And the bare heath a harvest yields.

Nature expects mankind should share
The duties of the public care.
Who's born for sloth ?¹ To some we find
The plough-share's annual toil assign'd.

¹ BARROW.

Some at the sounding anvil glow ;
Some the swift-sliding shuttle throw,
Some, studious of the wind and tide,
From pole to pole our commerce guide :
Some (taught by industry) impart
With hands and feet the works of art :
While some, of genius more refin'd,
With head and tongue assist mankind ;
Each, aiming at one common end,
Proves to the whole a needful friend.
Thus, born each other's useful aid,
By turns are obligations paid.

The monarch, when his table's spread,
Is to the clown oblig'd for bread ;
And when in all his glory drest,
Owes to the loom his royal vest.
Do not the mason's toil and care
Protect him from th' inclement air ?
Does not the cutler's art supply
The ornament that guards his thigh ?
All these, in duty, to the throne
Their common obligations own.

'Tis he (his own and people's cause)
Protects their properties and laws.
Thus they their honest toil employ,
And with content their fruits enjoy.
In ev'ry rank, or great or small,
'Tis industry supports us all.

The animals by want oppress'd,
To man their services address'd ;
While each pursu'd their selfish good,
They hunger'd for precarious food.
Their hours with anxious cares were vex'd ;
One day they fed, and starv'd the next.
They saw that plenty, sure and rife,
Was found alone in social life ;
That mutual industry profess'd,
The various wants of man redress'd.

The Cat, half-famish'd, lean and weak,
Demands the privilege to speak.
Well, Puss (says Man), and what can you
To benefit the public do ?

The Cat replies. These teeth, these claws,
With vigilance shall serve the cause.

The mouse, destroy'd by my pursuit,
No longer shall your feasts pollute ;
Nor rats, from nightly ambuscade,
With wasteful teeth your stores invade.

I grant, says Man, to gen'ral use
Your parts and talents may conduce ;
For rats and mice purloin our grain,
And threshers whirl the flail in vain.
Thus shall the Cat, a foe to spoil,
Protect the farmer's honest toil.

Then turning to the Dog, he cried,
Well, sir ; be next your merits tried.

Sir, says the Dog, by self-applause
We seem to own a friendless cause.
Ask those who know me, if distrust
E'er found me treach'rous or unjust.
Did I e'er faith or friendship break ?
Ask all those creatures ; let them speak.
My vigilance and trusty zeal
Perhaps might serve the public weal.
Might not your flocks in safety feed,
Were I to guard the fleecy breed ?

Did I the nightly watches keep,
Could thieves invade you while you sleep ?

The Man replies : 'Tis just and right ;
Rewards such service should requite.
So rare, in property, we find
Trust uncorrupt among mankind,
That, taken, in a public view,
The first distinction is your due.
Such merits all reward transcend :
Be then my comrade and my friend.

Addressing now the Fly : From you
What public service can accrue ?
From me ! (the flutt'ring insect said)
I thought you knew me better bred.
Sir, I'm a gentleman. Is't fit
That I to industry submit ?
Let mean mechanics, to be fed,
By bus'ness earn ignoble bread.
Lost in excess of daily joys,
No thought, no care, my life annoys,
At noon (the lady's matin hour)
I sip the tea's delicious flower.

On cates luxuriously I dine,
And drink the fragrance of the vine.
Studious of elegance and ease,
Myself alone I seek to please.

The Man his pert conceit derides,
And thus the useless coxcomb chides :

Hence, from that peach, that downy seat ;
No idle fool deserves to eat.
Could you have sapp'd the blushing rind,
And on that pulp ambrosial din'd,
Had not some hand, with skill and toil,
To raise the tree, prepar'd the soil ?
Consider, sot, what would ensue,
Were all such worthless things as you.
You'd soon be forc'd (by hunger stung)
To make your dirty meals on dung ;
On which such despicable need,
Unpitied, is reduc'd to feed ;
Besides, vain selfish insect, learn,
(If you can right and wrong discern)
That he, who with industrious zeal,
Contributes to the public weal,

By adding to the common good,
His own hath rightly understood.

So saying, with a sudden blow,
He laid the noxious vagrant low.
Crush'd in his luxury and pride,
The spunger on the public died.

FABLE IX.

*THE JACKAL, LEOPARD, AND OTHER
BEASTS.*

TO A MODERN POLITICIAN.

I GRANT corruption sways mankind ;
That int'rest, too, perverts the mind ;
That bribes have blinded common sense,
Foil'd reason, truth, and eloquence :
I grant you, too, our present crimes
Can equal those of former times.
Against plain facts shall I engage,
To vindicate our righteous age ?

I know, that in a modern fist,
Bribes in full energy subsist.
Since, then, these arguments prevail,
And itching palms are still so frail,
Hence politicians, you suggest,
Should drive the nail that goes the best ;
That it shows parts and penetration
To ply men with the right temptation.

To this I humbly must dissent ;
Premising no reflection's meant.

Does justice, or the client's sense,
Teach lawyers either side's defence ?
The fee gives eloquence its spirit ;
That only is the client's merit.
Does art, wit, wisdom, or address,
Obtain the prostitute's caress ?
The guinea (as in other trades)
From ev'ry hand alike persuades.
Man, Scripture says, is prone to evil ;
But does that vindicate the devil ?
Besides, the more mankind are prone,
The less the devil's parts are shown.

Corruption's not of modern date ;
It hath been tried in ev'ry state.
Great knaves of old their power have fenc'd,
By places, pensions, bribes, dispens'd ;
By these they gloried in success,
And impudently dar'd oppress ;
By these despotic'ly they sway'd,
And slaves extoll'd the hand that paid ;
Nor parts, nor genius were employ'd,
By these alone were realms destroy'd.

Now see these wretches in disgrace,
Stript of their treasures, pow'r, and place ;
View 'em abandon'd and forlorn,
Expos'd to just reproach and scorn.
What now is all your pride, your boast ?
Where are your slaves, your flatt'ring host ?
What tongues now feed you with applause ?
Where are the champions of your cause ?
Now ev'n that very fawning train
Which shar'd the gleanings of your gain,
Press foremost who shall first accuse
Your selfish jobs, your paltry views,

Your narrow schemes, your breach of trust,
And want of talents to be just.

What fools were these amidst their pow'r ?
How thoughtless of their adverse hour !
What friends were made ? A hireling herd,
For temporary votes preferr'd.
Was it, these sycophants to get,
Your bounty swell'd a nation's debt ?
You're bit. For these, like Swiss, attend ;
No longer pay, no longer friend.

The Lion is (beyond dispute)
Allow'd the most majestic brute ;
His valour and his gen'rous mind
Prove him superior of his kind.
Yet to Jackals (as 'tis averr'd)
Some Lions have their pow'r transferr'd ;
As if the parts of pimps and spies
To govern forests could suffice.

Once, studious of his private good,
A proud Jackal oppress'd the wood ;
To cram his own insatiate jaws,
Invaded property and laws.

The forest groans with discontent,
Fresh wrongs the gen'ral hate foment,
The spreading murmurs reach'd his ear ;
His secret hours were vex'd with fear.
Night after night he weighs the case,
And feels the terrors of disgrace.

By friends (says he) I'll guard my seat,
By those, malicious tongues defeat :
I'll strengthen pow'r by new allies,
And all my clam'rous foes despise.

To make the gen'rous beasts his friends,
He cringes, fawns, and condescends ;
But those repuls'd his abject court,
And scorn'd oppression to support.
Friends must be had. He can't subsist.
Bribes shall new proselytes enlist.
But these nought weigh'd in honest paws ;
For bribes confess a wicked cause.
Yet think not ev'ry paw withstands
What had prevail'd in human hands.

A tempting turnip's silver skin
Drew a base hog through thick and thin :

Bought with a stag's delicious haunch,
The mercenary wolf was staunch :
The convert fox grew warm and hearty,
A pullet gain'd him to the party :
The golden pippin in his fist,
A chatt'ring monkey join'd the list.

But soon expos'd to public hate,
The fav'rite's fall redress'd the state.
The Leopard, vindicating right,
Had brought his secret frauds to light.
As rats, before the mansion falls,
Desert late hospitable walls,
In shoals the servile creatures run,
To bow before the rising sun.

The hog with warmth express'd his zeal,
And was for hanging those that steal ;
But hop'd, though low, the public hoard .
Might half a turnip still afford.
Since saving measures were profess'd
A lamb's head was the wolf's request.
The fox submitted if to touch
A gosling would be deem'd too much.

The monkey thought his grin and chatter,
Might ask a nut or some such matter.

Ye hirelings, hence ! the Leopard cries ;
Your venal conscience I despise.
He who the public good intends,
By bribes needs never purchase friends.
Who acts this just, this open part,
Is propped by ev'ry honest heart.
Corruption now too late hath show'd,
That bribes are always ill-bestow'd :
By you your bubbled master's taught,
Time-serving tools, not friends, are bought.

FABLE X.

THE DEGENERATE BEES.

TO THE REVEREND DR. SWIFT, DEAN OF
ST. PATRICK'S.

THOUGH courts the practice disallow,
A friend at all times I'll avow.
In politics I know 'tis wrong :
A friendship may be kept too long ;

And what they call the prudent part,
Is to wear int'rest next the heart.
As the times take a different face,
Old friendships should to new give place.

I know too you have many foes,
That owning you is sharing those ;
That ev'ry knave in ev'ry station,
Of high and low denomination,
For what you speak, and what you write,
Dread you at once, and bear you spite.
Such freedoms in your works are shown,
They can't enjoy what's not their own.
All dunces too in church and state,
In frothy nonsense shew their hate ;
With all the petty scribbling crew
(And those pert sots are not a few),
'Gainst you and POPE their envy spurt—
The booksellers alone are hurt.

Good gods ! by what a powerful race
(For blockheads may have pow'r and place)
Are scandals rais'd and libels writ,
To prove your honesty and wit !

Think with yourself : Those worthy men,
You know, have suffer'd by your pen ;
From them you've nothing but your due.
From hence, 'tis plain, your friends are few.
Except myself, I know of none,
Besides the wise and good alone.
To set the case in fairer light,
My fable shall the rest recite ;
Which (tho' unlike our present state)
I for the moral's sake relate.

A Bee of cunning, not of parts,
Luxurious, negligent of arts,
Rapacious, arrogant, and vain,
Greedy of pow'r, but more of gain,
Corruption sow'd throughout the hive—
By petty rogues the great ones thrive.

As pow'r and wealth his views supplied,
'Twas seen in over-bearing pride.
With him loud impudence had merit ;
The Bee of conscience wanted spirit ;
And those who follow'd honour's rules,
Were laugh'd to scorn for squeamish fools.

Wealth claim'd distinction, favour, grace ;
And poverty alone was base.
He treated industry with slight,
Unless he found his profit by't.
Rights, laws, and liberties give way,
To bring his selfish schemes in play.
The swarm forgot the common toil,
To share the gleanings of his spoil.

While vulgar souls of narrow parts,
Waste life in low mechanic arts,
Let us (says he) to genius born,
The drudg'ry of our fathers scorn.
The wasp and drone, you must agree,
Live with more elegance than we.
Like gentlemen they sport and play ;
No bus'ness interrupts the day ;
Their hours to luxury they give,
And nobly on their neighbours live.

A stubborn Bee, among the swarm,
With honest indignation warm,
Thus from his cell with zeal replied :
I slight thy frowns, and hate thy pride.

The laws our native rights protect ;
Offending thee, I those respect.
Shall luxury corrupt the hive,
And none against the torrent strive ?
Exert the honour of your race ;
He builds his rise on your disgrace.
'Tis industry our state maintains :
'Twas honest toils and honest gains
That rais'd our sires to pow'r and fame.
Be virtuous ; save yourselves from shame.
Know, that in selfish ends pursuing,
You scramble for the public ruin.

He spoke ; and from his cell dismiss'd,
Was insolently scoff'd and hiss'd.
With him a friend or two resign'd,
Disdaining the degen'rate kind.

These drones (says he), these insects vile,
(I treat them in their proper style)
May for a time oppress the state,
They own our virtue by their hate ;
By that our merits they reveal,
And recommend our public zeal ;

Disgrac'd by this corrupted crew,
We're honour'd by the virtuous few.

FABLE XI.

THE PACK-HORSE AND THE CARRIER.

TO A YOUNG NOBLEMAN.

BEGIN, my Lord, in early youth,
To suffer, nay, encourage truth :
And blame me not for disrespect,
If I the flatt'rer's style reject ;
With that, by menial tongues supplied,
You're daily cocker'd up in pride.

The tree's distinguish'd by the fruit,
Be virtue then your sole pursuit ;
Set your great ancestors in view,
Like them deserve the title too ;
Like them ignoble actions scorn :
Let virtue prove you greatly born.

Though with less plate their side-board
shone,

Their conscience always was their own ;
They ne'er at levees meanly fawn'd,
Nor was their honour yearly pawn'd ;
Their hands, by no corruption stain'd,
The ministerial bribe disdain'd ;
They serv'd the crown with loyal zeal ;
Yet, jealous of the public weal,
They stood the bulwark of our laws,
And wore at heart their country's
cause ;

By neither place or pension bought,
They spoke and voted as they thought.
Thus did your sires adorn their seat ;
And such alone are truly great.

If you the paths of learning slight,
You're but a dunce in stronger light ;
In foremost rank the coward plac'd,
Is more conspicuously disgrac'd.
If you, to serve a paltry end,
To knavish jobs can condescend,

We pay you the contempt that's due ;
In that you have precedence too.

Whence had you this illustrious name ?
From virtue and unblemish'd fame.
By birth the name alone descends ;
Your honour on yourself depends :
Think not your coronet can hide
Assuming ignorance and pride.
Learning by study must be won,
'Twas ne'er entail'd from son to son.
Superior worth your rank requires ;
For that mankind reveres your sires :
If you degen'rate from your race,
Their merits heighten your disgrace.

A Carrier, ev'ry night and morn,
Would see his horses eat their corn :
This sunk the ostler's vails, 'tis true ;
But then his horses had their due.
Were we so cautious in all cases,
Small gain would rise from greater places.

The manger now had all its measure ;
He heard the grinding teeth with pleasure ;

When all at once confusion rung ;
They snorted, jostled, bit, and flung :
A Pack-horse turn'd his head aside,
Foaming, his eye-balls swell'd with pride.

Good gods ! (says he) how hard's my lot !
Is then my high descent forgot ?
Reduc'd to drudg'ry and disgrace
(A life unworthy of my race),
Must I too bear the vile attacks
Of ragged scrubs, and vulgar hacks ?
See scurvy ROAN, that brute ill-bred,
Dares from the manger thrust my head !
Shall I, who boast a noble line,
On Offals of these creatures dine ?
Kick'd by old BALL ! so mean a foe !
My honour suffers by the blow.
NEWMARKET speaks my grandsire's fame,
All jockies still revere his name :
There yearly are his triumphs told,
There all his massy plates inroll'd.
Whene'er led forth upon the plain,
You saw him with a liv'ry train ;

Returning too with laurels crown'd,
You heard the drums and trumpets sound.
Let it then, Sir, be understood,
Respect's my due ; for I have blood.

Vain-glorious fool ! (the Carrier cried)
Respect was never paid to pride.
Know 'twas thy giddy, wilful heart
Reduc'd thee to this slavish part.
Did not thy headstrong youth disdain
To learn the conduct of the rein ?
Thus coxcombs, blind to real merits,
In vicious frolics fancy spirit.
What is't to me by whom begot,
Thou restive, pert, conceited sot ?
Your sires I reverence ; 'tis their due :
But, worthless fool, what's that to you ?
Ask all the Carriers on the road,
They'll say thy keeping's ill bestow'd.
Then vaunt no more thy noble race,
That neither mends thy strength nor pace.
What profits me thy boast of blood ?
An ass hath more intrinsic good.

By outward show let's not be cheated ;
An ass should like an ass be treated.

FABLE XII.

PAN AND FORTUNE.

TO A YOUNG HEIR.

SOON as your father's death was known :
(As if th' estate had been their own),
The gamesters outwardly express'd
The decent joy within your breast.
So lavish in your praise they grew,
As spoke their certain hopes in you.

One counts your income of the year,
How much in ready money clear.

No house, says he, is more complete ;
The garden's elegant and great.
How fine the park around it lies !
The timber's of a noble size !
Then count his jewels and his plate.
Besides, 'tis no entail'd estate.

If cash run low, his lands in fee
Are, or for sale, or mortgage free.

Thus they, before you threw the main,
Seem to anticipate their gain.

Would you, when thieves were known
abroad,
Bring forth your treasures in the road ?
Would not the fool abet the stealth,
Who rashly thus expos'd his wealth ?
Yet this you do, whene'er you play
Among the gentlemen of prey.

Could fools to keep their own contrive,
On what, on whom could gamesters
thrive ?

Is it in charity you game,
To save your worthy gang from shame ?
Unless you furnish'd daily bread,
Which way could idleness be fed ?
Could these professors of deceit
Within the law no longer cheat,
They must run bolder risks for prey,
And strip the trav'ler on the way.

[illegible]

Some, for the folly of one hour,
Become the dirty tools of pow'r,
And, with the mercenary list,
Upon court-charity subsist.

You'll find at last this maxim true,
Fools are the game which knaves pursue.

The forest (a whole cent'ry's shade)
Must be one wasteful ruin made.
No mercy's shewn to age or kind ;
The general massacre is sign'd.
The park too shares the dreadful fate,
For duns grow louder at the gate,
Stern clowns, obedient to the 'Squire,
(What will not barb'rous hands for hire ?)
With brawny arms repeat the stroke.
Fall'n are the elm and rev'rend oak.
Through the long wood loud axes sound,
And echo groans with ev'ry wound.

To see the desolation spread,
Pan drops a tear, and hangs his head :
His bosom now with fury burns :
Beneath his hoof the dice he spurns.

Cards, too, in peevish passion torn,
The sport of whirling winds are borne.

To snails invet'rate hate I bear,
Who spoil the verdure of the year ;
The caterpillar I detest,
The blooming spring's voracious pest ;
The locust too, whose rav'nous band
Spreads sudden famine o'er the land.
But what are these ? The dice's throw
At once hath laid a forest low.

The cards are dealt, the bet is made,
And the wide park hath lost its shade.
Thus is my kingdom's pride defac'd,
And all its ancient glories waste.
All this (he cries) is FORTUNE'S doing :
'Tis thus she meditates my ruin.

By FORTUNE, that false, fickle jade,
More havock in one hour is made,
Than all the hungry insect race,
Combin'd, can in an age deface.

FORTUNE, by chance, who near him past,
O'erheard the vile aspersion cast.

Why, PAN (says she), what's all this rant?
'Tis ev'ry country-bubble's cant.
Am I the patroness of vice?
Is't I who cog or palm the dice?
Did I the shuffling art reveal,
To mark the cards, or range the deal?
In all th' employments men pursue,
I mind the least what gamesters do.
There may (if computation's just)
One now and then my conduct trust:
I blame the fool, for what can I,
When ninety-nine my pow'r defy?
These trust alone their fingers' ends,
And not one stake on me depends.
Whene'er the gaming board is set,
Two classes of mankind are met:
But if we count the greedy race,
The knaves fill up the greater space.
'Tis a gross error, held in schools,
That FORTUNE always favours fools.
In play it never bears dispute;
That doctrine these fell'd oaks confute.

Then why to me such rancour shew?
'Tis Folly, PAN, that is thy foe.
By me his late estate he won,
But he by Folly was undone.

FABLE XIII.

PLUTUS, CUPID, AND TIME.

OF all the burdens man must bear,
Time seems most galling and severe :
Beneath this grievous load oppress'd,
We daily meet some friend distress'd.
What can one do? I rose at nine.
'Tis full six hours before we dine :
Six hours ! no earthly thing to do !
Would I had dor'd in bed till two.
A pamphlet is before him spread,
And almost half a page is read ;
Tir'd with the study of the day;
The flutt'ring sheets are toss'd away.

He opes his snuff-box, hums an air,
Then yawns, and stretches in his chair.

Not twenty, by the minute hand !
Good gods ! says he, my watch must stand ?
How muddling 'tis on books to pore !
I thought I'd read an hour or more.
The morning, of all hours, I hate.
One can't contrive to rise too late.

To make the minutes faster run,
Then too his tiresome self to shun,
To the next coffee-house he speeds,
Takes up the news, some scraps he reads.
Saunt'ring, from chair to chair he trails ;
Now drinks his tea, now bites his nails.
He spies a partner of his woe ;
By chat afflictions lighter grow ;
Each other's grievances they share,
And thus their dreadful hours compare.

Says TOM, since all men must confess,
That Time lies heavy more or less ;
Why should it be so hard to get
Till two, a party at piquet ?

Play might relieve the lagging morn :
By cards long wintry nights are borne :
Does not quadrille amuse the fair,
Night after night, throughout the year ?
Vapours and spleen forgot, at play
They cheat uncounted hours away.

My case, says WILL, then must be hard,
By want of skill from play debarr'd.
Courtiers kill Time by various ways ;
Dependence wears out half their days.
How happy these, whose time ne'er stands !
Attendance takes it off their hands.
Were it not for this cursed show'r
The park had whil'd away an hour.
At court, without or place or view,
I daily lose an hour or two.
It fully answers my design,
When I have pick'd up friends to dine.
The tavern makes our burden light ;
Wine puts our Time and care to flight.
At six (hard case !) they call to pay.
Where can one go ? I hate the play.

From six till ten ! Unless in sleep,
One cannot spend the hours so cheap.
The comedy's no sooner done,
But some assembly is begun ;
Loit'ring from room to room I stray ;
Converse, but nothing hear or say ;
Quite tir'd, from fair to fair I roam.
So soon ! I dread the thoughts of home.
From thence, to quicken slow-pac'd night,
Again my tavern-friends invite :
Here too our early mornings pass,
Till drowsy sleep retards the glass.

Thus they their wretched life bemoan,
And make each other's case their own.

Consider, friends, no hour rolls on,
But something of your grief is gone.
Were you to schemes of bus'ness bred,
Did you the paths of learning tread,
Your hours, your days, would fly too fast ;
You'd then regret the minute past.
Time's fugitive and light as wind !
'Tis indolence that clogs your mind !

That and iron of your spirits shake :
 That I now am grateful for your mistake.
 A while your thoughtless spirit suspend,
 Then read, and if you can, attend.

As PLUTUS, to meet his case,

Talks to each one near to take the air,
 SUPP. retakes his scolding place.
 Each star is upon the stranger's face,
 'Till recollection set 'em right :
 For each knew richer but by sight.
 After some complimentary talk,
 THEY met 'em, bow'd, and join'd their walk.
 Their chat on various subjects ran,
 But most, what each had done for man.
 PLUTUS assumes a haughty air,
 Just like our purse-proud fellows here.

Let kings (says he), let cobblers tell,
 Whose gifts among mankind excel.
 Consider courts : What draws their train ?
 Think you 'tis loyalty or gain ?
 That statesman hath the strongest hold,
 Whose tool of politics is gold.

By that, in former reigns, 'tis said,
The knave in pow'r hath senates led,
By that alone he sway'd debates,
Enrich'd himself and beggar'd states.
Forego your boast. You must conclude,
That's most esteem'd that's most pursu'd.
Think too, in what a woeful plight
That wretch must live whose pocket's light.
Are not his hours by want deprest ?
Penurious care corrodes his breast.
Without respect, or love, or friends,
His solitary day descends.

You might, says CUPID, doubt my parts,
My knowledge too in human hearts,
Should I the pow'r of gold dispute,
Which great examples might confute.
I know, when nothing else prevails,
Persuasive money seldom fails ;
That beauty too (like other wares)
Its price, as well as conscience, bears.
Then marriage (as of late profess'd)
Is but a money-job at best.

[illegible]

Though little priz'd, and seldom sought ;
Without me love and gold are nought.
How does the miser time employ ?
Did I e'er see him life enjoy ?
By me forsook, the hoards he won,
Are scatter'd by his lavish son.
By me all useful arts are gain'd ;
Wealth, learning, wisdom is attain'd.
Who then would think (since such my pow'r)
That e'er I knew an idle hour ?
So subtle and so swift I fly,
Love's not more fugitive than I.
Who hath not heard coquettes complain
Of days, months, years, misspent in vain ?
For time misus'd they pine and waste,
And love's sweet pleasures never taste.
Those who direct their time aright,
If love or wealth their hopes excite,
In each pursuit fit hours employ'd,
And both by Time have been enjoy'd.
How heedless then are mortals grown !
How little is their int'rest known ?

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FAIR PLAY

FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD
 AND FOR THE FAIR PLAY

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Impartially their talents scan :

Just education forms the man.

Perhaps (their genius yet unknown)

Each lot of life's already thrown ;

That this shall plead, the next shall
fight,

The last assert the church's right.

I censure not the fond intent ;

But how precarious is th' event !

By talents misapplied and cross'd,

Consider, all your sons are lost.

One day (the tale's by MARTIAL
penn'd)

A father thus address'd his friend.

To train my boy, and call forth sense,

You know I've stuck at no expense ;

I've tried him in the sev'ral arts

(The lad, no doubt, hath latent parts),

Yet trying all, he nothing knows ;

But, crab-like, rather backward goes.

Teach me what yet remains undone ;

'Tis your advice shall fix my son.

In ev'ry view they ought to mind me ;
For when once lost they never find me.

He spoke. The gods no more contest,
And his superior gift confess'd :
That Time when (truly understood)
Is the most precious earthly good.

FABLE XIV.

*THE OWL, THE SWAN, THE COCK,
THE SPIDER, THE ASS, AND THE FARMER.*

TO A MOTHER.

CONVERSING with your sprightly boys,
Your eyes have spoke the Mother's joys
With what delight I've heard you quote
Their sayings in imperfect note !

I grant, in body and in mind,
Nature appears profusely kind.
Trust not to that. Act you your part ;
Imprint just morals on their heart,

Impartially their talents scan :

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The Spider of the Forest kind,
 Advis'd in secret time with him :
 The Ass learn'd negotiations and trades,
 But most on none he his trades.

The peasants now advised in age,
 Were call'd in time his busy stage :
 And in the summer twice summon'd,
 That each might in his part be heard.

The Oven says he in arms shall shine :
 The winer's garners will be thine.
 The Cock shall mighty wealth again :
 Go, seek it on the starry main.
 The Court shall be the Spider's sphere :
Power, fortune, shall reward him there.
 In music's art the Ass's fame
 Shall emulate CORELLI'S name.

Each took the part that he advis'd,
 And all were equally despis'd.
 A Farmer, at his fool's mov'd,
 The dull preceptor thus reprov'd.

Blockhead (says he), by what you've done,
 One would have thought 'em each your son :

For parents, to their offspring blind,
Consult nor parts nor turn of mind ;
But ev'n in infancy decree
What this, what t'other son should be.
Had you with judgment weigh'd the case,
Their genius thus had fix'd their place,
The Swan had learnt the sailor's art ;
The Cock had play'd the soldier's part ;
The Spider in the weaver's trade
With credit had a fortune made ;
But, for the foal, in ev'ry class
The blockhead had appear'd an Ass.

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The dinner must be dish'd at one.
Where's this vexatious Turnspit gone ?
Unless the skulking Cur is caught,
The sirloin's spoil'd, and I'm in fault.
Thus said : (for sure you'll think it fit
That I the Cook-maid's oaths omit)
With all the fury of a Cook,
Her cooler kitchen NAN forsook.
The broomstick o'er her head she waves ;
She sweats, she stamps, she puffs, she raves.
The sneaking Cur before her flies :
She whistles, calls ; fair speech she tries.
These nought avail. Her choler burns ;
The fist and cudgel threat by turns ;
With hasty stride she presses near ;
He slinks aloof, and howls with fear.

Was ever Cur so curs'd ! (he cried)
What star did at my birth preside !
Am I for life by compact bound
To tread the wheel's eternal round ?
Inglorious task ! Of all our race
No slave is half so mean and base.

Had fate a kinder lot assign'd,
And form'd me of the lap-dog kind,
I then, in higher life employ'd,
Had indolence and ease enjoy'd ;
And, like a gentleman, caress'd,
Had been the lady's fav'rite guest.
Or were I sprung from spaniel line,
Was his sagacious nostril mine,
By me, their never-erring guide,
From wood and plain their feasts supplied,
Knights, 'squires, attendant on my pace,
Had shar'd the pleasures of the chace.
Endu'd with native strength and fire,
Why call'd I not the lion sire ?
A lion ! such mean views I scorn.
Why was I not of woman born ?
Who dares with reason's pow'r contend ?
On man we brutal slaves depend :
To him all creatures tribute pay,
And luxury employs his day.
An ox by chance o'erheard his moan,
And thus rebuk'd the lazy drone.

Dare you at partial fate repine ?
How kind's your lot compar'd with mine !
Decreed to toil, the barb'rous knife
Hath sever'd me from social life ;
Urg'd by the stimulating goad,
I drag the cumbrous waggon's load :
'Tis mine to tame the stubborn plain,
Break the stiff soil, and house the grain ;
Yet I without a murmur bear
The various labours of the year.
But then consider, that one day
(Perhaps the hour's not far away),
You, by the duties of your post,
Shall turn the spit when I'm the roast :
And for reward shall share the feast,
I mean, shall pick my bones at least.

'Till now, the astonish'd Cur replies,
I look'd on all with envious eyes.
How false we judge by what appears !
All creatures feel their sev'ral cares.
If thus yon mighty beast complains,
Perhaps man knows superior pains.

Let envy then no more torment :
Think on the Ox, and learn content.

Thus said : close following at her heel,
With cheerful heart he mounts the wheel.

FABLE XVI.

*THE RAVENS, THE SEXTON, AND THE
EARTH-WORM.*

TO LAURA.

L AURA, methinks you're over nice.
True. Flatt'ry is a shocking vice ;
Yet sure, whene'er the praise is just,
One may commend without disgust.
Am I a privilege denied,
Indulg'd by ev'ry tongue beside ?
How singular, are all your ways !
A woman, and averse to praise !
If 'tis offence such truths to tell,
Why do your merits thus excel ?

Since then I dare not speak my mind,
A truth conspicuous to mankind ;
Though in full lustre ev'ry grace
Distinguish your celestial face :
Though beauties of inferior ray
(Like stars before the orb of day)
Turn pale and fade : I check my lays,
Admiring what I dare not praise.

If you the tribute due disdain,
The Muse's mortifying strain
Shall, like a woman, in mere spite,
Set beauty in a moral light.

Though such revenge might shock the
ear
Of many a celebrated fair ;
I mean that superficial race
Whose thoughts near reach beyond their
face ;
What's that to you ? I but displease
Such ever-girlish ears as these.
Virtue can brook the thoughts of age,
That lasts the same through ev'ry stage.

Though you by time must suffer more
Than ever woman lost before ;
To age is such indiff'rence shown,
As if your face were not your own.

Were you by ANTONINUS taught ?
Or is it native strength of thought,
That thus, without concern or fright,
You view yourself by reason's light ?

Those eyes of so divine a ray,
What are they ? Mould'ring, mortal clay.
Those features, cast in heav'nly mould,
Shall, like my coarser earth, grow old ;
Like common grass, the fairest flow'r
Must feel the hoary season's pow'r.

How weak, how vain is human pride !
Dares man upon himself confide ?
The wretch who glories in his gain,
Amasses heaps on heaps in vain.
Why lose we life in anxious cares,
To lay in hoards for future years ?
Can those (when tortur'd by disease)
Cheer our sick heart, or purchase ease ?

Can those prolong one gasp of breath,
Or calm the troubled hour of death ?

What's beauty ? Call ye that your own ?
A flower that fades as soon as blown.
What's man in all his boast of sway ?
Perhaps the tyrant of a day.

Alike the laws of life take place
Through ev'ry branch of human race,
The monarch of long regal line
Was rais'd from dust as frail as mine.
Can he pour health into his veins,
Or cool the fever's restless pains ?
Can he (worn down in Nature's course)
New-brace his feeble nerves with force ?
Can he (how vain is mortal pow'r !)
Stretch life beyond the destin'd hour ?

Consider, man ; weigh well thy frame ;
The king, the beggar is the same.
Dust formed us all. Each breathes his day,
Then sinks into his native clay.

Beneath a venerable yew,
That in the lonely church-yard grew,

Two Ravens sat. In solemn croak
Thus one his hungry friend bespoke.

Methinks I scent some rich repast ;
The savour strengthens with the blast ;
Snuff then, the promis'd feast inhale ;
I taste the carcass in the gale,
Near yonder trees, the farmer's steed,
From toil and daily drudg'ry freed,
Hath groan'd his last. A dainty treat !
To birds of taste, delicious meat.

A Sexton, busy at his trade,
To hear their chat suspends his spade.
Death struck him with no farther thought,
Than merely as the fees he brought.
Was ever two such blund'ring fowls,
In brains and manners less than owls !
Blockheads, says he, learn more respect ;
Know ye on whom ye thus reflect ?
In this same grave (who does me right,
Must own the work is strong and tight)
The 'Squire that yon fair hall possess'd,
To-night shall lay his bones at rest.

Whence could the gross mistake proceed ?
The 'Squire was somewhat fat indeed.
What then ? The meanest bird of prey
Such want of sense could ne'er betray ;
For sure some diff'rence must be found
(Suppose the smelling organ sound)
In carcasses (say what we can)
Or where's the dignity of man ?

With due respect to human race,
The Ravens undertook the case.
In such similitude of scent,
Man ne'er could think reflexions meant.
As epicures extol a treat,
And seem their sav'ry words to eat,
They prais'd dead horse, luxurious food,
The ven'son of the prescient brood.

The Sexton's indignation mov'd,
The mean comparison reprov'd ;
The undiscerning palate blam'd,
Which two-legg'd carrion thus defam'd.

Reproachful speech from either side
The want of argument supplied :

They rail, revile : as often ends
The contest of disputing friends.

Hold, says the Fowl ; since human pride
With confutation ne'er complied,
Let's state the case, and then refer
The knotty point : for taste may err.

As thus he spoke, from out the mould
An Earth-worm, huge of size, unroll'd
His monstrous length. They straight agree
To choose him as their referee.
So to th' experience of his jaws,
Each states the merits of his cause.

He paus'd, and with a solemn tone,
Thus made his sage opinion known.

On carcasses of ev'ry kind
This maw hath elegantly din'd ;
Provok'd by luxury or need,
On beast, or fowl, or man, I feed ;
Such small distinctions in the savour,
By turns I choose the fancied flavour.
Yet I must own that human beast,
A glutton, is the rankest feast.

Man, cannot find heart ; for human pride
Hath various tracts to range beside.
The prince who kept the world in awe,
The judge whose dictate fill'd the law,
The rich, the poor, the great, the small,
Are level'd. Death confounds 'em all.
Then think not that we reptiles share
Such cates, such elegance of fare :
The only true and real good
Of man was never vermin's food.
'Tis seated in th' immortal mind ;
Virtue distinguishes mankind,
And that (as yet ne'er harbour'd here)
Mounts with his soul we know not where.
So, good-man Sexton, since the case
Appears with such a dubious face,
To neither I the cause determine,
For different tastes please different vermin.

THE END.

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